Interview with Charles W. McCaskill

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

CONSUL GENERAL CHARLES W. McCASKILL

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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This is an interview with Charles W. McCaskill. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Q: Could we start where you come from? A bit about your background, where were you born, when, and a bit about your family and education?

McCASKILL: I was born in Camden, South Carolina, on February 21, 1923. Camden had a population of about 5,000 then. Everybody knew everybody else, doors were never locked, people never worried about their kids because they knew somebody was looking out for them. But times were very hard; I was a Depression child. My father was an elected county official for 29 years until he was defeated unexpectedly in 1929. He lost everything when the banks closed. My mother was a school teacher. I remember when she supported the family on $45.00 a month or something like that. My father died in 1935. It was am article of faith with my mother that my brother and I would attend college.I was a fairly good high school football player and had a number of football scholarships, including one to Auburn, Alabama, which had a very good team in those days. But since, by the time I graduated in 1941, the war was looming, I chose an academic scholarship to The Citadel, the military college in South Carolina. I completed two full years there before I went into the Army on

June 12, 1943. I served 34 months, 17 of them in the European Theater. I was discharged on April 14, 1946.

Q: What did you do in the military?

McCASKILL: My military service was relatively unremarkable: infantry basic training at Fort Riley, Kansas; the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) at the University of Nebraska for six months; shipment to the 66th Infantry Division at Camp Robinson, Arkansas in March, 1944; and finally, overseas with that division in November, 1944. After a month in England, we sailed for France on Christmas Eve Day, 1944, heading, we thought at the time, to the Battle of the Bulge which was then raging. One of the two transports on which about half of the division was sailing was sunk in the Channel with the loss of 750-800 people, a very rude introduction to the war for young soldiers. I was not on the vessel which was sunk, but I lost a number of friends. My company's losses were 18-20 as I recall. We learned later that we were in fact not headed to the Battle of the Bulge, but went instead to the defensive perimeters around St. Nazaire and Lorient, two of the big sub-pens cut off by General Patton in his dash across France. The 94th Division, which we relieved, went to the Bulge and suffered very heavy losses.A rather good little book entitled A Night Before Christmas has been written on the sinking.After the war, I went to the 42nd Rainbow Division in Austria where I remained until March 1946 when I began heading home for discharge.

Q: You were in Austria then?

McCASKILL: Yes, for about six months. I was discharged on April 14, 1946, and returned to The Citadel as a civilian student in July, like most veterans anxious to finish school and get on with my life. At the time, I anticipated going into South Carolina politics, and planned to go to the University of South Carolina Law School since a law degree from the University was a prerequisite for getting into politics.Somewhere along the line — I really can't say where — I lost the desire to go to law school or to get into politics. I think, first,

that the Army showed me that there was a world beyond the borders of South Carolina, and secondly, going overseas showed me there was a world beyond the shores of the United States.

Q: World War II, as I do these interviews, was the greatest recruiter for the Foreign Service. For me, it was the Korean War. I mean, this broke us out of our convention to the womb.

McCASKILL: It really did. I don't know just where, but somewhere along the line I decided that I wanted to get into the Foreign Service.

Q: Had you heard about it?

McCASKILL: I first heard about it from my brother who took the exam in 1946. He was a rather good student of languages and scored well when he took the exam, just failing to pass. I am not sure when his interest in the Service waned. I think my first interest in the Service as a career came from him. Anyway, I abandoned the idea of going to law school and took a graduate degree in history and political science, looking toward the Foreign Service.I graduated from The Citadel in September, 1947 and took the exam then in Atlanta, flunking it by two points. That was in the time of the three-and-a-half day exam, a very long and tough undertaking. I went to the University of South Carolina, where, as I noted, I took a graduate degree in history and political science.I was offered a slot in the Displaced Persons Program issuing visas to displaced persons in Germany. I was sworn in as an FSS-11, Vice Consul, in March of 1950, and shortly thereafter sailed for Germany. Our government had determined that it was easier to take the consulates to the displaced persons than it was to take the displaced persons to the consulates. I was in Schweinfurt, a sub-office of our Consulate General in Frankfurt. Our office consisted of three officers and two American clerks. In each camp, there were a Displaced Persons Commission (DPC), which helped with assembling necessary documents, etc. for the applicants, and an INS representative.

Q: Immigration and Naturalization Service.

McCASKILL: Yes. In our case, the INS rep was on the same floor we were on. The applicants were in a real pipeline: applicants would come from the Displaced Persons Commission up to us, they would be interviewed, and, in most cases, visas were issued. Then they would go down the hall to the INS Inspector who would check them out and in effect admit them to the US. If there was any difficulty between the INS and the Consulate on a particular case, we worked it out on the spot. When the DPs arrived at a US port, they had already been found to be admissible and could be processed out to their sponsors. The system worked rather well, since any questions were worked out on the spot by the DPC, the Consulate and the INS.

Q: Who were some of the people? What types of people were you seeing?

McCASKILL: We were in a rather large, former German Army camp, the Schweinfurt Panzer Caserne. All of the several thousand people living in the camp had been uprooted by the war. There were Poles, Hungarians, Balts, some Czechs, people from all walks of life waiting to start a new life. In the camp, the DPs were taken care of by various welfare organizations: the National Catholic Welfare Service, I think HIAS had a representative. . . .

Q: That was the Jewish agency, and then there was the Tolstoy Foundation. There was a Protestant one whose name I can't think of.

McCASKILL: The Church World Service. All of these organizations were doing a great deal toward clothing the DPs, feeding them, etc. And of course, our government was very much involved in the program.

Q: What were the main causes on the political side keeping people from coming into the United States?

McCASKILL: Anyone who had had anything to do with the Nazi organizations, or Germany itself, was ineligible to receive a visa: an application for Nazi Party membership, for example, membership in any Nazi Organization. One of our interpreters. a Latvian who spoke Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian, Ukrainian, German and English, was himself ineligible because he had applied for membership in the Nazi Party when Latvia was occupied. The old Berlin Document Center records, which we apparently captured before they could be destroyed, were really quite reliable and did some of the DPs in by revealing their past political activities. There was an occasional moral turpitude case, but most of the refusals were based on political grounds. And there was little attention on, or attention to, the Communist menace.

Q: I might say for the record when I was in Frankfurt with the Refugee Relief Program five years later, where this sort of cleaned up the situation. If you had one crime of moral turpitude, and it wasn't too bad, we could excuse it. Membership in the Nazi Party was not ipso facto ground for refusal. It had to have been significant activity. Many of these things were just a cleaning up process.

McCASKILL: By then some different interpretations had come in, involuntary membership, membership in youth organizations under 16 years of age, for example.

Q: It was sort of cleaning up although the Communist side was emphasized much more. You were there about a year?

McCASKILL: Yes. We had some family problems and I came home and went to work in the Visa Office, at that time experiencing a flood of work. Two well known visa circulars had gone out — remember that this was the beginning of the Cold War — establishing new criteria for refusing visas or at least for referring cases to the Department for advisory opinion. It was a rather long list of categories of cases, including the cases of those who had relatives in Eastern Europe, those who had ever lived in Eastern Europe, those who had visited Eastern Europe, and on and on. This was in the McCarthy era, when Senator

Pat McCarran and Congressman Francis Walter were the driving force behind terribly restrictive security visa regulations

Q: Francis Walter of Pennsylvania. Pat McCarran was a Senator from Nevada.

McCASKILL: These two were the Visa Office's special patrons on the Hill. They were already drawing up the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, the codification of much of this. It was known as the McCarran-Walter Act.

Q: And basically the core document for 20 or more years. It kept being amended. I think they came up with really new legislation in the 1980s. You were in the Visa Office from 1951 to 1956?

McCASKILL: Yes. While I was there I became interested in the Greek cases being referred to the Department from all over the world because the Greek resistance organizations and the Greek seamen's union were on our proscribed list. This is an oversimplification of a complicated question, but basically describes the situation. Athens was complaining that many applicants were not really excludable, and my boss in the Visa Office asked me to make a study of the situation and draw up some guidelines. Through this study I became involved in and very interested in Modern Greece, stimulated to a very great degree by Charlie Lagoudakis, a man who knew more about Modern Greece than any other single person I have known and the Greek specialist in INR. Anyway, as a result of this interest, I applied for Greek Language and Area Training — as it was known in those days — and began training in January, 1956. I was the first Foreign Service Greek language trainee. This was during the time of the Wriston Program in the Department, and soon after language training started, I was sworn in as an FSR and later lateraled in as an FSO. The language school of FSI was in an old barracks on C Street about where the Diplomatic Entrance is now. My tutor and I were in a very small room — about 8' by 12' — for six hours a day. Alone in the class I had no gauge by which to judge my progress. I argued unsuccessfully for more grammar, more stress on reading, etc. But the “system”

was much less sophisticated than it has become and I was confined to six hours a day of repetition and about an hour a day on the tapes. I had to admit, after I finished, that I had learned a good bit of grammar without realizing it and that when I wanted to say “the son of my sister's friend” I did not have to figure out how to say it. While I did not learn to read Greek as well as most of those who followed me learned, I did come out of FSI with an excellent accent.The program then was a two-part program: if you did well in the language, you then had an academic year of area studies. Finding a program in Modern Greek studies was not easy in 1956. We contacted the Dean of the Department of Oriental Studies at Princeton, who had been a classmate of the Dean of the FSI Language School, and he suggested that I might study in his Department. Actually, the Turkish and Persian area students had been studying in the Department of Oriental Studies for some years.I went to Princeton thinking I would be working with Dr. Lewis Thomas, the Ottoman History man, not knowing until I got there that he was on sabbatical that year. I sort of bounced around the first semester; I did take a course under a marvelous professor from Columbia, Tibor Halasi Kun, who was brought in to give the Ottoman History course the first semester. The second semester I found my way over to the Woodrow Wilson School and Dr. Cyril Black, a well-known eastern and southern European man who agreed to do a reading course on Modern Greece for me. That reading course, and a graduate seminar of Black's which I took, constituted the meat of the year for me. Professor Black was really very helpful and motivated me a great deal. I kept in touch with him for some years after I left Princeton.I went directly from Princeton to Thessaloniki. I was disappointed that I was not assigned to Athens, a wonderful and interesting post. But I loved the three years we were in Thessaloniki.

Q: You were married?

McCASKILL: Yes, I was married and had two small sons, five and just over two at the time. As I noted we were there three full years.

Q: 1957 to 1960?

McCASKILL: Yes. The consulate was relatively small in those days — although not as small as it has become since then. We lived in the suburb of Aretsou, and it was not long before my boys were in communication with the Greek kids. By the time we left Thessaloniki in 1960, they were bilingual in Greek, completely at home in Greek and in the Greek environment. When they spoke Greek in Cyprus, Cypriots mistook them for mainland Greek kids.

Q: What were you doing in Thessaloniki?

McCASKILL: The first year-and-a-half I was doing consular and economic work. When we got a new boss in 1958, I, as the only language man on the staff, began doing more political work, following the minority question in Thrace, for example, and traveling more. The new Consul General felt, and I agreed, that the language officer should get around more.

Q: Who was the Consul General?

McCASKILL: Robert S. Folsom, a fine CG and a good friend. My first Consul General was Philip W. Ireland, who was sometimes quite difficult to work for. Under Folsom, I saw a lot of Northern Greece and learned a lot about the area. There were some interesting problems there, such as the Muslim minority in Thrace, which I have mentioned.

Q: What was the political situation in this period in northern Greece as you saw it?

McCASKILL: When I first arrived in Greece, Karamanlis had just been elected Prime Minister. When the Prime Minister, General Papagos, died in October, 1955, he was succeeded by Constantine Karamanlis, who had been the Minister of Public Works in the Papagos Government. Karamanlis was “chosen out of turn”, so to speak, and there were those who saw “the foreign hand” in his selection. Karamanlis was elected in his own right in February, 1956, and was governing when I arrived in Greece. For reasons I do not remember, a group of Deputies of Karamanlis's party broke with him in the spring of

1958, he lost his majority in Parliament, and he was forced to call elections, I believe in May, 1958. The Greek Communist Party, known in Greece by the acronym KKE, had been outlawed in Greece since just after World War II. There was an organization, however, the Union of the Democratic Left, known by its acronym EDA, which became the umbrella for all sorts of fellow-travelers, leftists, some old-line communists, etc. Meanwhile, the old Liberal Party, was led jointly by George Papandreou and Sophocles Venizelos, the former the father of Andreas Papandreou, the latter the son of the great Eleftherios Venizelos. The party was known to be weak, but it nonetheless offered a slate throughout the country.

In those elections, Greece and its allies received a tremendous shock when EDA received almost 25% of the popular vote, 24.6 or 24.8%. EDA became the largest opposition party and the principal opposition in the Parliament, the leader of the opposition, though I have forgotten the number of deputies it elected. The Liberal Party, the old historic party, was practically wiped out, with only three deputies in all of Northern Greece.

Karamanlis formed a government because he had a majority of the 300 deputies in Parliament, but it was a shock to everybody that EDA, a leftist-front organization, could take almost 25% of the popular vote. To give you an idea, the famous composer Mikis Theodorakis was elected on the EDA ticket.

Q: Yes, the man who wrote the music for the move "Z" and other things.

McCASKILL: That's right. A man who has been all over the political spectrum, most recently in the conservative party of Constantine Mitsotakis. There were elections again but I have forgotten just when since I had left for Cyprus. Karamanlis governed until 1963, when he had his big argument with the Palace and left in a huff for Paris.

I went on home leave in 1959, and learned from Personnel, when I was passing through Washington on my way back to Thessaloniki, that I had been assigned to the new Embassy in Cyprus as Economic/Commercial Officer. The Department was busily

engaged in staffing the Embassy in Nicosia, and I was being assigned as the Greek language officer. We left Thessaloniki in July of 1960 on direct transfer to Cyprus.

Q: To go back to Thessaloniki at that time: How were relations between the Consulate General and the Embassy? What was the feeling towards Ambassadors Riddleberger and Briggs would you say?

McCASKILL: Actually we had three Ambassadors while I was in Greece. Ambassador Allen. . . .

Q: George Allen.

McCASKILL: Ambassador George Allen was there just a short time. I consider him, Ambassador Riddleberger, and Ambassador Briggs three of the finest career ambassadors I had the honor, the privilege, of working for. They were all different, of course.Ambassador Riddleberger was very senior at the time but was a very warm human being. In those days, when we were in the Embassy, we would drop cards on the Ambassador as a courtesy. Once when I was there and stopped to drop a card in Ambassador Riddleberger's office, his secretary suggested that he might want to see me. She told him on his intercom that I was there, and he asked me to come in. In response to my protestations that I knew he was busy and did not want to interrupt him, he insisted that I come in and “sit down and smoke a cigarette.” We talked for 10-15 minutes when he was in fact very busy. I was tremendously impressed that he would give me so much of his time and I have never forgotten it.

Ambassador Briggs was an entirely different type, a very colorful Ambassador. He used to visit Thessaloniki frequently because he was a big duck hunter and there were lots of duck in Northern Greece. As I noted previously, I considered Ambassador Riddleberger and Ambassador Briggs among the best career senior Foreign Service Officers I knew during

my career. I seem to have stronger memories of the two of them than I do of Ambassador Allen who left Greece shortly after I arrived.

Q: While you were in Thessaloniki, how did you and the people around you view George Papandreou? What was the feeling towards him?

McCASKILL: In Thessaloniki, we did not know much about Papandreou and we depended on the Embassy for guidance on such matters. As I indicated earlier, Papandreou's party was in shambles. After the election debacle of 1958, word got around that the Embassy was looking for promising young Liberal Party members to cultivate. Two sons of prominent Liberal Party politicians returned to Greece about that time, i. e. 1959: Andreas Papandreou, George's son, and John Tsouderos, the son of previous Prime Minister Emmanuel Tsouderos.

Q: Andreas Papandreou had been an American citizen?

McCASKILL: Yes, teaching economics at the University of California, a very highly regarded economist, married to an American woman. He returned to Greece in, I believe, 1959. One had to wonder if there was more to his return than met the eye.

Q: As you talked to people in Thessaloniki, were you getting a feeling for the view of the royal family at that time?

McCASKILL: I have no recollection of that.

Q: It shows it was not a major topic.

McCASKILL: It was not. I have absolutely no recollection of ever discussing it there.

Q: What about the local politicians? How did they impress you?

McCASKILL: I knew several of them and they impressed me fairly favorably.

Q: Again going back to this time. Were efforts made by the military, the politicians, etc., to mute the differences with Turkey, to avoid being constantly hit with headlines about the things Turks were doing to Greece etc.?

McCASKILL: No, there was nothing in the media, or almost nothing in the media. There was a conscious effort by the Greek Government to keep the lid on the minorities question. I always felt that the Greek Government went out of the way to conform to the Treaty of Lausanne, which provided for the Muslim minority in Thrace and the Christian minority in Istanbul. I thought, and continue to think, that Turkish claims of harassment of Turks in Thrace are terribly overdrawn. I don't for a minute say there is no discrimination. There is discrimination there as there is everywhere in such situations. But I have never thought there was any real harassment of the Turks in Thrace. Greece has, over the years, gotten the short end of the stick on this one, and the Turks have continued to exaggerate their claims. You have only to look at what happened in Istanbul in September, 1955, when mobs ran rampant against the Greek community in that city to see that the Greeks have been taken on this one.

Q: And you were monitoring it too.

McCASKILL: We followed it rather closely, though very discreetly since the Government was very sensitive on this issue. A member of the Ministry of Northern Greece made it quite clear to me that his Ministry was under standing instructions not to do anything to complicate the problem for Athens, to give the Turks no grounds for complaint. The Muslims, or Turks, lived very much to themselves in those days. I went into a Turkish village in Thrace on one occasion to pay a claim against the Consulate resulting from an accident and found that the Turk whom I needed to deal with spoke no Greek. The gendarme, who was helping me, spoke a bit of Turkish and interpreted for me.

To repeat what I said a minute ago, I have always thought that Greece has never made its case very well on the minorities question. The Greek community of Istanbul, over 100,000

in 1955, is down to 5-10,000 today. The Muslim or Turkish community in Thrace was about 100,000 in 1955 and is 120-140,000 today. Those figures speak for themselves. Ankara, under the leadership of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has very skillfully stirred up the minorities question against the Greeks from time to time, using it as a diplomatic weapon against Greece. The Turks would take some minor, isolated incident and blow it all out of proportion. The Turks have bullied the Greeks on this one, as they have on other subjects, and Greece has been relatively free from real criticism on this one.

Q: You were in Cyprus from 1960 to 1964. In the first place, what was your job when you went out to Cyprus?

McCASKILL: I arrived in Cyprus almost exactly one month before independence, which occurred on August 16, 1960. I went as Economic/Commercial Officer but found after I got there that I would also be doing the consular work because the Department had taken a budget cut, and we had lost the consular officer position. The position was restored in about a year, but until then I did the consular work in addition to my duties as Economic/ Commercial Officer.

Q: Can you describe Cyprus at the time you arrived, what the political/economic situation was?

McCASKILL: The London-Zurich Agreements establishing the new Republic of Cyprus had been signed in February, 1960, and there was some relief (obviously premature) among all parties concerned (except the Greek Cypriots) that the Cyprus Problem was “settled”. Athens was truly anxious to put the Cyprus Problem to rest, to get on with solving some of Greece's problems. It should be kept in mind that Greece was at war longer than any other single European country — from October 28, 1940 to the end of the Bandit War in 1949 — and the Greek Government wanted to get on with rebuilding the country. The Greeks had been completely preoccupied with Cyprus from the early 1950s and time and energy that should have gone into reconstruction of Greece were devoted to Cyprus. The international

community was fed up with Cyprus, which had been at the center of the world stage for some years. So the feeling in Greece, at least in Thessaloniki, was one of relief that the problem was settled. It was our perception that the Greeks were relieved.

When I arrived in Cyprus I was surprised to find a general feeling among the Greek Cypriot community — which was 80% of the population — that the London-Zurich Agreements would not work, that the safeguards written into the agreements for the Turkish Cypriots were extreme, that the agreements were “not fair”, and on and on.

In truth, the agreements were an extremely complicated set of agreements which did, in my opinion, give the Turkish Cypriots too many safeguards. Former Under Secretary of State George Ball described the Agreements as an “impressive diplomatic tour de force” which were “too complex to be workable”. Most objectionable to the Greek Cypriots, Turkey could, under the Treaty of Guarantee, intervene in Cyprus. The Turkish Cypriot community's vetoes, legislative and executive, could bring the government to a standstill; the Turkish Cypriots, 20% of the population, were given 30% of the civil service and the legislature. The Greek Cypriots vigorously opposed the concept that the two communities on the island were equal partners, that there was no majority community and no minority community, that they were both equal participants in the government. The Greek Cypriots, including Makarios, felt that the agreements had been imposed on Cyprus by circumstances, that Makarios had been “forced” to sign ; no Greek Cypriot was present when the Greeks and the Turks reached agreement. Makarios stated later that he signed because the British threatened to partition the island if he did not agree to the agreements, and he feared that intercommunal fighting like that of 1958 would begin again. Moreover, Greek Prime Minister Karamanlis rebuked Makarios rather strenuously at the first meeting in London and threatened to withdraw Greek support if Makarios refused to sign the agreements. Makarios had indicated in 1958 that he could accept a solution of an independent Cyprus rather than insisting on union with Greek. Great Britain by 1958 had reviewed its security position and had decided that bases on the island would satisfy its security requirements and that it did not need to hold the entire island. All of

this led to the conference in Zurich and later in London.I've gone beyond the political/ economic situation on the island when I got there but this does give a little flavor of what we were hearing when I arrived. I might add that I have thought about the London-Zurich Agreements over the years, and I have concluded that it was probably impossible for a small group of Greek and Turkish diplomats to work out, even in outline, such complicated agreements, and I have wondered if the agreements were drafted in London and slipped to the Turks who then put them on the table in Zurich. You may recall that they met in Zurich for less than a week and drew up an outline of the agreement; they then met in London a few days later to sign them. Many of the provisions had been contained in previous British proposals — most recently the MacMillan Plan — but one still has to wonder if the Greeks and Turks had the diplomatic expertise for such an undertaking.

Speaking of the pressures on Makarios, Ambassador Nikos Kranidiotis, the Cyprus Ambassador in Athens for many years, in his book entitled Difficult Years says that Makarios anguished all night over whether or not to sign. He received calls from Queen Frederika in Athens, from former Governor of Cyprus Hugh Foot, and from the leader of the British Labor Party, all urging him to sign. As a footnote, I asked Frederika, whom I came to know fairly well when I was Consul General in Madras, if the story were true and she said her husband spoke to Makarios. The King only called, she said, because they were afraid that the Karamanlis government would fall if Makarios refused to sign. She indicated that fear that the government would fall justified what otherwise could have been termed “intervention” in Greek internal affairs. I believe Kranidiotis' version, and have always felt, that for whatever reason, Frederika was dissembling with me.Cyprus was dubbed by some over the years as “The Reluctant Republic”, since it was felt that the solution really desired by the majority Greek Cypriots was union with Greece rather than independence, and that independence was “forced” on Makarios. Those very early days were very interesting and exciting and even humorous as we approached independence. There was a story on the island that Makarios, by then the President-elect, and Turkish Cypriot Vice President-elect Fazil Kucuk realized rather late that they had not even thought

of a flag. After all, every country had to have a flag on independence day, and they agreed on a temporary flag which was a sort of yellowish-clayish outline of the island on a white background with olive branches underneath. That was to be temporary, and they were to design a more appropriate flag later with their help of time. Nobody has yet designed another flag of Cyprus and that one is still used as the official flag.

I rode around Nicosia, the capital, a good bit on independence day, and I saw Greek flags in the Greek quarter and Turkish flags in the Turkish quarter. This is what a former governor referred to as “the flag nuisance” in Cyprus. Under the British occupation, the Greek Cypriots traditionally brought out the Greek flag on holidays, rather than the Union Jack. This tended to grate on British nerves but they never found a way to counter it.

Q: What was the feeling when you arrived in Cyprus, from your colleagues at the Embassy and in Washington, about where Cyprus was going. What was the feeling at the time?

McCASKILL: There was actually widespread interest in Cyprus when it became independent. It was one of the first newly-independent small republics. With a population of 600,000 it was considered a very small country in those days, and there was considerable interest in seeing that it worked. Because of the long fight against the British and the fact that the problem was debated at such length in the UN, everybody knew where and what Cyprus was.Our own interests were several: (1) to deny the Soviets access to the Mediterranean through Cyprus. There was a well organized Communist Party of 10,000 members on Cyprus and in 1960, this was of considerable concern to us. (2) to insure the continued function of US facilities — our Federal Broadcasting Information Service (FBIS) facility, our relay facility, etc. — on the island; (3) to insure the continued functioning of the British Sovereign Bases (SBAs) on the island; (4) to work to prevent Cyprus from disrupting the southeastern flank of NATO by becoming an issue between our NATO allies Greece and Turkey.

These are given in no particular order, though there was some preoccupation with the "communist threat" in Cyprus, and even President Kennedy was said to be taken with the island and the problem in the early days.

Q: FBIS is not a covert intelligence operation. We would monitor broadcasts, translate them, and then pass them out to anyone.

McCASKILL: It is an overt monitoring service, and that particular location was highly effective for monitoring internal domestic broadcasts in the Soviet Union. It was said to be one of our most effective FBIS stations. Secondly, we had a tremendous radio relay station, only a relay point. Communication facilities were not as sophisticated as they are today. The relay station had direct lines to Washington. Messages would go, for example, from Beirut to Cyprus, off of one wire onto another for direct transmission to Washington. And then there was another facility referred to just as a station. I suppose it was an NSA facility.

Q: National Security Agency.

McCASKILL: It was staffed when I was there by US Navy personnel because during the Greek Cypriot terrorist campaign against the British life became so tense that the Department had problems getting civilians to go there. We had a rather large complex of facilities and a very real interest in the island. We wanted to protect our interests and keep Cyprus from falling under Soviet influence. Remember that the Soviet fleet was active in the Mediterranean at the time, and our interests in Cyprus were real.

To show our interest we wanted to get off to a quick start. One possibility we had was a PL 480 program which we were able to justify on the basis of a drought of several years. It took some doing — we did not even have a copy of PL 480 in the Embassy when we started talking about it with the Cypriots. A couple of AID types came over from Amman to help us out, and we drew up a program for 50,000 tons of wheat and barley. We gave

it to Cyprus under Title II of PL 480. It was worth several million dollars and the Cypriots appreciated the gesture. The British had given Cyprus a golden handshake, really in return for the sovereign bases, and ours was the first assistance of any kind outside the British. We also began an Exchange Program and other USIS activities. And significantly, Makarios paid an official visit to Washington, and Vice President Johnson paid a return visit to Cyprus. Two visits in the first couple of years of Cyprus's independence were proof of out interest in the island.

The Soviets had a tremendous diplomatic establishment in Nicosia, and we concluded that it was a regional Soviet base. They had an excellent Turkish language officer in their Embassy, and one or more Greek speakers.

Our Embassy was relatively small. The Ambassador, the DCM, a Political Officer, an Economic/Commercial Officer, and a rather large administrative section because we gave administrative support to FBIS, the relay base, etc. The station was composed of three officers and two clerical staff. But, as I said, the Embassy proper was very small.

Q: The Ambassador the whole time you were there was Fraser Wilkins, wasn't it?

McCASKILL: All but about six months.

Q: One, how did he operate; and two, what was your impression about how he felt about Cyprus?

McCASKILL: Ambassador Wilkins arrived in Nicosia in September, 1960. I do not know for sure, but looking back I believe his only instructions were to encourage the Cypriots to make London-Zurich work. I have recently read some declassified materials that would seem to indicate that Wilkins did not believe the Agency's reporting and did not seem convinced that trouble was on the horizon. I had heard this from some of the Agency people some time ago, but only recently have seen a few things indicating that it was indeed the case.As I mentioned previously, it was suggested that we might use PL 480

as one of our instruments, but I am relatively sure nobody was looking at the possibility that London-Zurich would not work, nobody was doing any contingency thinking, let alone contingency planning. I think those were the Ambassador's instructions and I think he hewed to that line.

Q: When you were on your economic/commercial side, what were your main tasks?

McCASKILL: Interestingly there was a fair amount of commercial work, inquiries, etc. Even in a population of 600,000, merchants were looking for new products to sell. And American firms were looking for business in Cyprus, which let it be known that it needed a new power plant and a small refinery. Remember that Cyprus was oriented toward the UK; on independence, people began to look elsewhere. The economy of Cyprus was not doing badly at independence. The income from the British bases was a significant factor in the economy; the “Golden Handshake” was a boost. I have forgotten the figures but the per capita income of Cyprus was much higher than that of Greece or Turkey. And there was great interest in the economy. Just before independence, it was announced that the UN would send a team out, under an eminent American economist, Dr. Willard Thorp, to draw up a five-year plan for Cyprus. The UN delegation consisted of several good economists so I drew on their expertise to some degree.

But there was not all that much pure economic work in a post that small, especially with the UN team and our own AID mission, when they came in about a year, so I sort of gradually slipped over into political-type work, talking to people, getting out around the island, etc. Cyprus was a wonderful place to work, and access was easy. I still remember those days very warmly as among my best in the Service.

Q: What about your contacts with the Turkish side?

McCASKILL: I had fairly good contacts on the Turkish side, but in truth the Greek Cypriots were the dominant business/commercial/banking forces in the island. To give you an example: I gave a party in the port city of Limassol, a sort of get-acquainted party.

Limassol was the business capital of Cyprus, and instead of asking 50 or 60 people to drive to Nicosia, I gave the party in Limassol. Even in the business capital of the island it was difficult to find Turkish Cypriot businessmen of any significance. One of my best friends in Nicosia was a Turkish Cypriot who ran a well-known bookshop, but he was relative small scale then.

Q: You were saying there was a ten thousand-strong dedicated Communist Party which is really a very potent weapon. Ten thousand disciplined Communists in any place can be a problem. Did we have much contact, or feeling for what they were doing?

McCASKILL: Yes, we had contact with them. The Political Officer had contact with them, and we would see them at parties occasionally. Makarios never considered them a danger. He was in many ways relatively naive politically. He considered them members of his Greek Cypriot flock, no danger to him. He actually made a deal with them in the first election. Makarios was not unopposed in the first election held just before independence, and he gave the Communists five seats in the first Parliament in return for their pledge not to oppose him. He felt in the final analysis that he could control them, that he really did not have to worry about them. I guess you could say that he actually was proven right. He seemed to think we overplayed “the threat”. We were very conscious of them and their very strong labor union. To counter the communist union, we worked closely with the non-communist union and did what we could to strengthen them through grants, exchanges, etc.

Q: As the new republic began to take shape, what was CIA up to, what were they doing? Or was that beyond your camp?

McCASKILL: You may remember that Agency reporting was distributed on a need-to-know basis, and since most of their reporting was political, I was not on distribution for their material. However, I knew the Agency people very well — we were good friends in fact — and while I did not see their reporting, I knew what they were talking about. The

Chief of Station was also a good friend of mine. So while I was out of the loop officially, I was nonetheless privy to the substance of what they were sending to Washington.

One of the things that has haunted me about Cyprus, and continues to haunt me to this day, is that the Agency apparently was reporting that the island was going to blow up, that the two communities were arming themselves to the teeth, and that a blow-up was inevitable. In fact, in early 1963, the Chief of Station indicated his strong belief that the situation would blow before the end of the year. What haunts me is that if they were reporting this back to Washington, wasn't anybody reading it? And why did we not do something to head off the crisis? In their book entitled Facing the Brink, reportedly based on Mr. Ball's papers, Edward Weintal and Charles Bartlett said something to the effect that it was “inconceivable” but true that no advance planning was done for the “predictable” Cyprus crisis. Mr. Ball says in his own book that the effort to maintain a balance between the two communities “was bound to fail”.

So, based on all of this — recognition that the Cyprus “experiment” was bound to fail, good CIA reporting, etc — why did we do nothing to head it off? We admitted in retrospect that Cyprus was a very strategic piece of real estate between two NATO allies which alone should have pushed us to try to head off the “predictable” crisis. And of course this was on top of the fact that we had failed to recognize the problem for what it was in the 1950s, that is, simply another problem of a colonial people wanting self-determination. It was complicated by the fact that self-determination for the Greek Cypriots meant union with Greece. And the fact that 20% of the population was Turkish Cypriot made it even more difficult. However, we handled it poorly all along, and that is something else which has haunted me all these years. It is of more than passing interest to me, in looking at the problems in the area overall, that the Turkish Kurds constitute 20% of the population of Turkey, as the Turkish Cypriots were 20% of the population of Cyprus.

Q: Did you have any feeling about what the CIA — I'm not trying to drag out dirty secrets — but any feeling how the CIA types were getting their information? What were they seeing that you weren't seeing?

McCASKILL: I have reason to believe that they had a very good source, very close to the government. Everybody knew everybody else in Cyprus, and after I became Cyprus Desk Officer and did read their reporting, I tried to figure out who the source was. I finally decided that it was A, B or C. I tried this on one of my old Agency friends from Cyprus, telling him that I never could figure out who that source was. “Who do you think it was?” he asked. I replied that I thought it was A, B or C. He replied laughingly that those were good guesses but that he could not tell me more than that. I now think I know who it was and it was indeed a very good source close to the center of things in Nicosia.

Q: What were you getting, both from Ambassador Wilkins and the rest of the Embassy who were dealing with it, and you yourself, about Makarios at the time, how effective he was, for example? What was your impression of how he was handling the situation?

McCASKILL: I say with hindsight that the person most responsible for the failure of the London-Zurich Agreements was Makarios. While we recognized that he was determined to amend or revise the agreements, I am not sure we really knew how far he was prepared to go, and in truth Nancy Crawshaw, the British writer and authority on Cyprus, says that Makarios was taken aback by the reaction to his suggestions for constitutional amendment. The government was a presidential system, with, constitutionally, a president who was always Greek Cypriot and a Vice President who was always Turkish Cypriot. Of the ten cabinet ministers, 7 were Greek, 3 were Turkish. (Of course, Makarios gave the Turkish Cypriots the less important ministries, he thought, though it did not work out that way entirely.)It bears mention that certainly in 1963, and maybe even earlier, Makarios thought he had UK support for constitutional reform. I myself accept that the Brits did

indicate some support for reform, and must perforce accept some of the blame for the blow-up. As a footnote, this is documented in Clerides's book.

With Makarios, one never knew where the line between president and priest came, since he continued to exercise such priestly duties as performing marriages, presiding at engagement ceremonies, baptizing children, etc.

Another thing that has bothered me in retrospect is that I think we never realized that, under his clerical robes, there was a Cyprus peasant priest. He was very shrewd, you might say cunning, but underneath he was a Paphos peasant who wanted to put the Turkish Cypriots in their places. He was determined from the very beginning to revise the constitution, even though the London-Zurich Agreements did not allow revision. The popular perception of Makarios was that he was a wise, intelligent, world figure who could hold his own on the world stage. I believe, as I said above, that he was a very shrewd village priest skilled in the way of the Byzantines, always pushing his adversary to the brink, but always with his eye on the prize, which was a Cyprus dominated and governed by the Greek Cypriot majority with adequate safeguards for the Turkish Cypriot minority,

Q: Was his determination to revise the constitution supported by most of the Greek community that you talked to? Were there real problems, or were there perceived problems with the Turkish minority?

M. McCASKILL: While some Greek Cypriots may have been more moderate than others, all, deep in their hearts, felt that the Agreements were unfair and that the constitution needed revision. For all of its shortcomings, the London-Zurich Agreements could have worked with a modicum of good faith on both sides. I think, for example, if Makarios had given freely the 30% of the civil service to the Turkish Cypriots, if he had been more generous with the Turkish Cypriot community, it might have worked. The Turkish Cypriots were simply not up to partnership with the Greek Cypriots, and they would have been overwhelmed by the Greek Cypriots in time. I am speaking here of the long term. But in

that regard we must remember that Cyprus became independent in 1960, 33 years ago. Who knows what might have evolved, peacefully, by now. I personally feel, as I may have said previously, that Cyprus would be a unitary state dominated by the majority Greek Cypriots.

The Turks were very aware of what London-Zurich had given them, and they would have opposed each Greek encroachment strenuously. But I still feel, that over time, the Greek Cypriots would have had things their way.

Q: I gather that it was a fairly submissive, not overly educated community. In other words, it did not have strong leadership?

McCASKILL: The Turkish Cypriot community had one real leader, Rauf Denktash, very bright, very fast on his feet, and heads and shoulders above anybody else in the community. Fazil Kucuk was the nominal leader, but in truth Denktash had pushed Kucuk aside. I believe that, after the troubles started, no solution but partition was acceptable to Rauf Denktash, and the Greek Cypriots played right into his hands. In the late 1950s, the Turkish Cypriots had countered the Greek demands for union with demands for partition. In fact, the Turkish Cypriots had traditionally taken that tack. So partition was not a new concept.As I indicated previously, Denktash was very, very bright. He had been a Queen's Counsel, in Cyprus, and had tried some very delicate Greek Cypriot cases during the EOKA period, I think maybe the first cases of Greek Cypriots sentenced to hang. It is not beyond the realm of reason to assume that the British pushed him to the fore in the Turkish Cypriot community. It is the kind of thing the UK did throughout the former colonies.

Q: Did you have the feeling that the Greek Government in Athens was meddling in Cyprus's affairs?

McCASKILL: On the contrary, Athens was carefully trying to distance itself from Cyprus in those early days after independence. The two Greek Ambassadors during that four

years were highly able career men who were apparently under instructions to try to make London-Zurich work. At least one of them, to my knowledge, would become very irritated with Makarios's headstrong ways, and I personally heard him talking about Makarios in very uncomplimentary terms at a cocktail party. I thought, in fact, that his remarks on that occasion bordered on indiscretion. When Makarios was hellbent on constitutional reform, then Greek Foreign Minister Evangelos Averoff wrote him a rather strong letter advising against such a move. Averoff himself told me once in Athens when I was last stationed there that those first three years of Cyprus's independence were “a real honeymoon” between Greece and Turkey. Averoff blamed Makarios for the blow-up, and made no effort to hide his resentment concerning the way things had gone. In that regard, the London-Zurich Agreements were concluded when Averoff was Foreign Minister, so he had a personal stake in seeing them work.

Q: What about Grivas and the other EOKA people? Where were they?

McCASKILL: Grivas had left the island by that time. I can't remember just when but he left after the Agreements were signed. He went to Athens where he formed a political party, I believe, and fell flat on his face. He did not go back to the island until 1964, after the troubles had started again. Many of the original EOKA fighters had been taken into Makarios's government, many of them as members of the Parliament.

Q: How did the blow-up happen? How did you and other in the Embassy see this thing? Give us some personal accounts.

McCASKILL: We had good information from the Agency that both sides were arming, were forming paramilitary units to oppose the expected attacks of the other. That both communities were arming has been confirmed by Glafkos Clerides, the present President of Cyprus, in his book entitled My Deposition. The Greeks had even begun patrols around the Turkish quarter of Nicosia, under the leadership of the Minister of Interior, a former EOKA fighter and real gunman. Apparently the Greek Cypriots had information that the

Turks had received several shipments of rifles that they were going to distribute. Each side knew the other was arming and tension was escalating between them.

On the night of December 22, 1963, a Turkish Cypriot car with four Turkish Cypriots in it was returning to the Turkish quarter. They were actually in the red light district of Nicosia, a sort of no man's land between the two quarters, though in thinking about it I guess the red light district could not, per se, be a “no-man's land”. Anyway, the Turks were stopped by a group of Greek Cypriot policemen and ordered out of the car. Shooting ensued — who knows who fired the first shot — two or three Turkish Cypriots were killed and a Greek Cypriot policeman was killed. That started it. An incident like that started it.

We were having a party that night; it was the day before our wedding anniversary and we were having some friends from the Embassy in for dinner. We went ahead with the party despite the fact that the tension all over town was unlike anything I had ever experienced, an almost warlike-atmosphere all over town. Houses were shuttered up, traffic was at a minimum, there was a feeling that people were preparing for something.A Turkish Cypriot Embassy driver who helped at parties was to work at our house that night. He stopped by about 5:00 p.m. to say he could not work: he may have been exaggerating, but he told me that if he were not shot coming out of the Turkish quarter, he would be shot going back in. He was obviously terrified. He got back into the Turkish quarter all right and I did not see him for three or four months. He could not come to work, and I made arrangements to go into the Turkish quarter one day three or four months later and see him.

We made it through the party and our guests got home safely. The next day, a Sunday, December 23, dawned clear and tense. I will never forget the tension throughout town. Nobody moved. People were obviously hunkered down. A firefight broke out in the early evening about a mile as the crow flies from my house. You could smell the gun smoke in my yard. The whole staff headed over to the Embassy, though I can't remember what we did except to try to get a handle on the situation and report it to Washington. Everybody on the staff seemed to realize that that was the beginning of what would be a very bad

period.I can't remember the details, but I know that we went on to a sort of war-time footing, certainly an emergency footing. We set up an Operations Room (I think that's what we called it) which followed events closely and began regular sitreps to the Department. Our DCM was on home leave at the time, so we were missing one of our substantive staff. This threw some burden on the rest of us. As I recall, the Political Officer, the Consular Officer and I manned the Control Room; the Consular Officer and I did a good part of it. It is my recollection that I actually drafted many, if not most, of the sitreps. We were working long, hard hours, with almost no time out even for Christmas dinner. For a time, we were working around the clock.

An interesting note: we had, to my knowledge, three overflights of two planes each by the Turkish Air Force in the period right around Christmas. In a Security Council meeting of December 26 or thereabouts, the Turks denied all but one of the overflights, and I believe the Turkish Ambassador in Washington denied the reports when he was called in by Assistant Secretary Phil Talbot. The Department instructed us to be very careful in reporting overflights, but there was no doubt in the minds of many of us that overflights had occurred. Who else would be breaking the sound barrier over Nicosia in fighter planes with red markings?

Ambassador Wilkins and the Acting British High Commissioner, Cyril Pickard, were very active in trying to dampen things down and work out a cease fire. (The British High Commissioner was in England when the trouble broke, for reasons I cannot recall.) The city had rapidly become divided, as the Turkish Cypriots withdrew into what was obviously a preconceived position in the northern part of Nicosia in the direction of the small port of Kyrenia on the north coast. Information available to us indicated that their emergency planning called for them to take the Kyrenia road as far as the pass in the Kyrenia mountains, since Turkish relief for the Turkish Cypriots would come through the north and into Nicosia through the Kyrenia pass. That is in fact what happened in 1974

when the Turks invaded. The northern coast of Cyprus was only 40 miles from the Turkish mainland and that was the logical route for an invasion force.

But right away the city became divided, a sort of miniature Berlin. Sir Duncan Sandys, I believe Commonwealth Secretary at the time, came out to try to help keep the situation under control and cobble together a cease-fire. The Green Line, the line dividing the two communities, came into being when a British army officer engaged in the peace efforts drew a line on the map with a green crayon. The Green Line stands to this day, though it has undergone some changes in the 30 years since it was drawn.

One time, Ambassador Wilkins was returning from the Turkish quarter where he had gone on official business, and he was stopped at a checkpoint and some young punk, a member of one of the paramilitary groups roaming the city, pointed a gun at the Ambassador's head. Ambassador Wilkins never confirmed that story to me, but I have always believed it. It gives a little of the atmosphere in the city at the time.

Q: You were saying you all were working around the clock. What were you, as an Embassy, doing?

McCASKILL: As I said, we were manning the Operations Center, reporting developments on the island in as great detail as we could. Remember that the possibility of war between Greece and Turkey seemed very possible and we were doing anything, everything we could to dampen down the situation to avoid Turkish action. We wanted the Department and Athens and Ankara to be as fully informed as possible since they were working as hard as we to avoid any further tragic developments. All Embassy staff reported everything they heard to us for reporting and we reported up everything we got.

Q: Other than reporting were we playing any role?

McCASKILL: Of course. Ambassador Wilkins was in touch with the government all along. For example, there was a reported sighting of a Turkish flotilla off the northern coast of

Cyprus. This was the sort of thing that could have provoked a reaction from the Greeks; it terrorized the people on the north coast, including some of our FBIS people. It was assumed of course that the Turks were headed toward Cyprus. The Embassy checked this out with Washington, which checked it with Ankara, and we were able to tell the Greeks and Greek Cypriots that it was only a “Turkish exercise”. Of course, it was gunboat diplomacy, a show of force, but we played a key role in reassuring the Greeks and Greek Cypriots that they were not under immediate threat from the Turks.

When we received that word, the Ambassador went to the Presidential Palace to inform Makarios. He could not find Makarios so delivered the message to some of his people there. When the Ambassador twitted Makarios about this later, the Archbishop said he figured that if the Turks were determined to invade, there was nothing he could do to stop it so he said his prayers and went to bed.

But that was the kind of thing we could do: act as middle man between the Turks and Greeks, and try to put out the fires as best we could.

Q: Were you getting much from out embassies in Athens and Ankara? Did they appear to have “gone local”, as some of our embassies have been accused of doing? Or did you find reporting from there pretty professional?

McCASKILL: I think we found them very professional. They were advising caution and restraint, certainly in Ankara. In Ankara Ambassador Hare was advising the Turks not to do anything precipitously because we did have reports from Ankara that the Turkish military was very steamed up about how Turkish Cypriots were getting killed. There was one awful incident that understandably aroused the Turks: a Turkish army officer's wife — remember that there was a Turkish army contingent on the island in conformity with the Treaty of Alliance — and three children took refuge in the bathtub, where they were found by some Greek Cypriot paramilitary forces and killed right where they had tried to hide. Pictures of the bodies were circulated in Cyprus and on the mainland, and according to

reports, really got the Turkish military steamed up. So the Turkish government needed to be cautioned to exercise restraint. The reporting from Ambassador Hare was, as would be expected, very professional and very helpful.

There were three very real invasion scares in the space of several months. One was the last week of December; one on Friday, March 13, 1964; (I remember well because I was the Embassy duty officer; Ambassador Hare really thought they were coming then); and one was in June. When the so-called Johnson-Inonu letter was sent to Ankara calling off the Turks in very blunt terms.

Q: When did you leave Cyprus?

McCASKILL: I didn't leave until July, so I was there for seven months of the emergency.

Q: During that seven months, what were the main things you were doing and experiencing?

McCASKILL: Well, we were reporting on what was going on, as I have mentioned. I did not do a lot of economic reporting during the seven months after the troubles started, since it was difficult to focus on it when the island was threatening to go up in smoke. I was doing more political work, getting out and talking to people.

It was interesting how the violence spread from town to town. I have forgotten the precise sequence, but it started in Nicosia, and went from there to Limassol; from there it hopped over to Paphos; then to Famagusta, and finally to Larnaca.

The United Nations peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, known popularly by its acronym UNFICYP, came in March, and we followed its progress as it settled in. In addition to the peacekeeping force, two high ranking UN officials came to the island about the same time: the UN Mediator, Former Finnish Prime Minister Sakari Tuomioja, and the Secretary General's Special Representative on the island, former Ecuadoran President,

Mr. Galo Plaza. There was also a UN police contingent. We kept in touch with all of these organizations and people, exchanging information and views in order to broaden our understanding of the situation.

Q: While you were there, was it true that the Greek military was beginning to get involved again?

McCASKILL: Yes. This became known to us in the summer of 1960. Before I left the Greeks had started putting troops on the island surreptitiously because they felt that if the Turks took action, Greece would be at a marked disadvantage. The Greeks were, in effect, trying to get a jump on the situation. I would have to check the numbers, but they stayed until the confrontation of 1967 when Athens agreed to withdraw them. It is interesting that they went in in 1964, when George Papandreou was in office.

Q: Were you hearing about it?

McCASKILL: Yes, the Agency was getting reports on it, but the troops were pretty well hidden up in the hills, in restricted areas. The Greeks and Greek Cypriots did a good job keeping it quiet, bringing the troops in at night, drawing the curtains on the buses, etc.

Q: By the time you left, what was your feeling, and that of the rest of the Embassy, about whither Cyprus?

McCASKILL: When I left the island I think the general feeling in the Embassy was that the situation could not go on for long. The Turkish Cypriots were suffering some privation. Fresh vegetables and seafood were limited in the Turkish quarter because of travel restrictions on the community; a friend of mine who had been a ranking officer in the Ministry of Agriculture told me that they received only two gallons of gasoline a week. This same friend said that he felt “terribly hemmed in”, with no place to go. Make no mistake about it: the Turkish Cypriots were under siege. They had only two telephone lines in and out of the Turkish quarter at one time. Their electricity and water were never cut,

simply because cooler heads on the Greek side knew that such drastic action would bring Turkey in for sure and prevailed on the more radical elements. When I told one good friend goodbye, the day before I left the island, I honestly felt that they could not hold out another six to eight months. And there, of course, was one of our basic mistakes. I think my view was held by many people, but we were obviously wrong. I see in retrospect that the Turkish Cypriots, with Turkey's support, were prepared to sit there until hell froze over. But I think many of us felt that the Turkish Cypriots would, within several months, probably fold up. One mistake we Americans make in diplomacy is to think in short terms; in the Middle East, a year is as a day, or something like that, and things move slowly, slowly.

Q: Was there a feeling that the Turkish Government could not stand by and watch them fold up?

McCASKILL: When I say “fold up”, I think we were thinking that they would come to terms with the Greek Cypriots, decide that anything was better than the way they were living, and just decide to live together again on the Greek Cypriots' terms, that is, with the Greek Cypriots as the majority, the Turkish Cypriots as the minority with certain safeguards.

One of the primary goals of the United States then was to avoid seeing Turkey humiliated. We simply would not stand by and see Turkey humiliated by a settlement. The Turks knew that, of course, and they exploited it for all it was worth. This has become institutionalized in the Department, I believe, and this attitude, perhaps modified over the years, continues until today.

In the spring of 1964, there was a rumor in the Turkish quarter that we were considering an exchange of populations settlement. I am sure this was kicked around in the Department but I do not know that it ever reached the Seventh Floor. Our reply to inquiries concerning solutions was that we would support any solution arrived at by the parties. We were obviously very much involved in the search for a solution — i. e., the Acheson mission in the summer of 1964 — though we would have denied that we would try to force

a settlement on the parties.I have wondered over the years if the Cyprus Problem were not a Muslim-Christian problem, and I am not sure that is not at the root of it. I could never satisfactorily explain why people who otherwise seemed normal would want to go out and wantonly kill their fellow islanders.

Q: Look at what is happening today, in 1993, in Yugoslavia particularly. Ethnicity is such a strong, strong force that it permeates everything. And this seems true of some of the Muslims, who carry the virus on many grounds. At least they make the ground fertile.

McCASKILL: I just wanted to make one last point before we break, and that is that there seemed to be a sort of lemming instinct in Cyprus. Certainly the Greek Cypriots seemed hellbent on self-destruction. We used to talk about this in the Embassy and agreed that it was true.

Q: This is September 21, 1993. You said you wanted to add something about the Ball visit and how the system worked?

McCASKILL: Under Secretary Ball came to Cyprus in mid-February (1964) with a peace plan, accompanied by Mr. Sisco, then Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs, Ambassador Jack Jernegan, an old NEA/GTI hand who was then a Deputy Assistant Secretary for NEA, and I believe a Mr. Greenfield, who was Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. Mr. Ball apparently decided during the trip that the problem required a change in Ambassadors, and after his return, Ambassador Wilkins was called home on consultation.We learned soon after he left that then FSO-2 Taylor G. (Toby) Belcher who, you remember, had been Consul General in Nicosia from 1957 to 1960, was coming out to “cover” in Ambassador Wilkins' absence, a most unusual sort of move. The DCM, who had returned from home leave, was pushed aside and was understandably irate, since this didn't say much for the Department's confidence in him. Toby told us in a staff meeting that he would actually be the new Ambassador. But it was an embarrassing situation, for Wilkins, for Toby, and for the DCM. The Department was late in getting Toby's orders to

return to Washington to him, so he was still in Nicosia when Wilkins arrived back. We had, at one time, Ambassador Wilkins, “Ambassador-Designate” Belcher and a DCM, all there together. To say it was a bit awkward is putting it mildly, and the Department handled it very, very poorly.

On the action side, in early February a bomb exploded at the Embassy and Ambassador Wilkins rather quickly ordered the evacuation of all dependents. It was a controversial move, but he announced it on Cyprus television the evening after the bomb exploded and he could not back down. Whether we should have evacuated would probably still be argued among those of us who were there. Not all of the Embassy wives had left by the time Mr. Ball arrived and I heard that he was furious that some were still there and gave the remaining dependents just a few days to leave. My own wife and sons were among those who had not left and as I remember they had about two days to get packed and get a booking home. I felt then and still feel that evacuation was probably not called for at that time, but in truth there was a large American community — communications dependents, etc. — and I think Ambassador Wilkins felt personally responsible for them all.

Q: You came back to the Cyprus Desk where you served from 1964 to 1967?

McCASKILL: Actually I was assigned to NE/E at first. In those days there were four offices in the old NEA Bureau: the Office of Near Eastern Affairs (NE); the Office of Greek, Turkish and Iranian Affairs (GTI), where the Cyprus Desk was located; the Office of South Asian Affairs (SOA), which included India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka; and an Office of Regional Affairs. I was assigned to the economics section of NE and I worked on Arab/Israel economic affairs for about six months. Gordon King, the Cyprus Desk Officer and a friend of mine, wanted to make a change and left to go to the Peace Corps.

When I went to GTI, every Desk Officer in the office had served in the country for which he was responsible or otherwise had experience in the area: I had served in Cyprus for four years and my number two had served in Turkey; the Turkish Desk Officer and his assistant

had both served in Turkey; both officers on the Greek Desk had served in Greece, and both of those on the Iranian Desk had served in Iran.

Q: A very strong office.

McCASKILL: We thought so at the time. The Office Director herself had actually served in Greece, Turkey and Iran.

Q: Who was that?

McCASKILL: Kay Bracken. I think she was an FSO-1 at the time. Her deputy, John Howison, had served in Iran and I believe Turkey. So we had a tremendous amount of area expertise in GTI. I think those two years in GTI may have been among my most enjoyable in my 35 years in the Service.

Q: While you were on the Cyprus Desk, what were the main issues you had to deal with?

McCASKILL: The main issue, of course, was the Cyprus Problem and a solution for it. We had very knowledgeable people not only in GTI but in all of Washington. I felt at the time that there was probably as much Cyprus expertise in Washington as there was in any capital. We spent an inordinate amount of time “looking for a solution”, trying to get a mix that we thought would fly. We were an ad hoc kind of group: we had coffee together, we had lunch together, we took a walk after lunch during the day, all the time bouncing ideas off each other.

A corollary was keeping the Greeks and Turks apart. The UN peacekeeping force in Cyprus was a relatively large force when it came into being in March, 1964, 6-7,000 men.

I might digress to tell you an interesting anecdote. Dr. Ralph Bunche, the Number Two in the UN, visited the island in March, 1964 to see the problem for himself and report to the Secretary General. At his departure statement he said that he was glad that he had come to Cyprus to see this “incoherent war” for himself, since one could not always understand

it from New York. However, he went on, once in Cyprus, one could not always believe what one saw. I still have the clipping reporting his press conference and even started a paper one time entitled “The Incoherent War”, giving Dr. Bunche the credit for the very apt description of the situation.

Cyprus was obviously getting top billing, with a Bunche visit, and the appointment of Mr. Tuomioja and Mr. Galo Plazo, both of whom I have mentioned.

To get back to my original point, another focus of our activity was keeping the Greeks and Turks apart with the help of the United Nations.

Q: There wasn't a real line was there? I mean there were Turkish villages and Greek villages all intermingled.

McCASKILL: There was the line in Nicosia which I have mentioned known as “The Green Line”. There were fairly clear dividing lines in all the five towns, where the Turkish Cypriots had withdrawn into the Turkish quarter for security reasons. But in the countryside, there were still some mixed villages. There was not much interchange between the two communities, and even the villages were divided to some extent, but not to the degree the towns were divided.

Q: You were saying you were sitting around with your colleagues trying to find a solution. Was there any consensus? I mean, what did you feel were some of your options, and what were the thoughts at the expert level?

McCASKILL: It's hard to remember what some of those were. One of our first approaches was to try to find out precisely what Turkey wanted so that we could work with them from there. We had the problem of trying to find a solution that included ironclad safeguards for the Turkish community. I think we believed that the Turks could not hope to regain their “equal community” status they had gotten from London-Zurich.

I have wondered over the years where the “equal community” concept came from and have concluded that it was an outgrowth of the old Ottoman millet system, when the Ottomans administered minority communities in the Ottoman Empire through the community heads. In Cyprus, for example, the head of the Greek Cypriot community was the Ethnarch, who happened to be the Archbishop of the Church of Cyprus at the time. All taxes, administrative decrees, etc., directed at his community, were administered through him.

Our task was to find some balance that would satisfy the Greeks and the Turks, with security the first consideration. We got some indication of the Turks' requirements out of the Ankara, four or five things that all meant the same thing: no domination of one community by the other, equal participation of both communities in the government, and that sort of thing. The Turks spoke about “not upsetting the balance of the Treaty of Lausanne in the area” but one hears little of that out of Ankara since Turkey itself upset the balance with its invasion in 1974.

We spent a lot of time working on this. We considered such things as territorial compensation for the Turks if the island were united with Greece. For example, former Secretary Acheson's mission in the summer of 1964 envisaged a permanent Turkish base on the island. This was unacceptable to the Greeks; when it was scaled down to a long-term lease base for the Turks, they rejected that. In looking back, it may have been impossible to find the right package at that time. And that itself is meaningful, that is, “the right package at the right time”, since timing was extremely important.

Q: Was the general feeling that the Greeks would not treat the Turks kindly if they got control?

McCASKILL: I'm not sure that feeling was prevalent. I think there was a feeling among the working level types that it should be a “Greek Cypriot solution”. The Greeks were, after all, 80-82% of the population. I think that we all felt that it had to be a majority rule. The

precedent in Greece led us to believe that the Greeks would not, could not, persecute the Turks without fear of intervention from Turkey. Still, the Greeks looked upon the Turks as the hewers of wood and drawers of water, and would not be happy until they were firmly relegated to that status. The Greek Cypriots, like all Greeks everywhere, felt themselves culturally superior to the Turks, and would find it difficult to accord the Turks anything but minority status.

Q: I've heard people come back and say, when all is said and done, that the Greeks really aren't very nice to the Turks.

McCASKILL: Let me answer that with an anecdote. When I gave the party in Limassol I referred to previously, I was standing at the door of the restaurant greeting my guests. I was chatting with a Greek Cypriot businessman from a rather prominent family, when another guest approached. When the man was within earshot, the Greek Cypriot said to me “Oh, Mr. McCaskill, here comes Mr. So-and-So. He's a good Turk.” I thought that if I had been that Turkish Cypriot I would have hated that Greek Cypriot's guts. Mind you, if the shoe had been on the other foot the same attitude might have prevailed.

Q: Did you think it could be solved?

McCASKILL: I think I did then. I must have. I was told one time by a colleague, who was then Political Counselor in Ankara, that I never “gave up”. So I must have thought so then. I've become jaded over these 30 years. I've lost some of the enthusiasm I had then, but I can only believe that I must have thought so at the time.

Q: What was the thinking in the higher reaches of NEA, and even further up in the Department about Cyprus. Was this just a pain in the neck, fouling up NATO? Also how was Makarios viewed?

McCASKILL: Cyprus had top level attention in the Department from late 1963 for several years. There was some commitment on the Seventh Floor, where our efforts were led by

Mr. Ball, that Cyprus would not be allowed to destroy NATO. Mr. Ball himself tried to put a solution together, again determined not to let Cyprus ruin NATO. It is hard for me today to remember the amount of very high-level this problem, which seems small potatoes when compared to the Balkans, was getting.

I have mentioned our concern with the Communist menace. I don't think I mentioned that three of the five mayors in the island were Communists. I mentioned the large Soviet mission. Cyprus was disrupting NATO; the southeast flank was impaired by Cyprus. President Kennedy, before his death, felt we should do something, though I never saw what he wanted to do spelled out.

Makarios was looked upon back in Washington as a very unsavory, untrustworthy, unpredictable man, and, I might add, very uncooperative. That was in part because he had taken Cyprus into the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, looking ahead to the time when he would need Non-Aligned support in the UN. Mr. Ball had a very bad impression of Makarios, regarding him as very slippery (though he referred to Makarios once as one of the most intelligent people he had ever dealt with.) Mr. Ball never really understood that Makarios was a genuine Byzantine. Andreas Papandreou referred to Makarios once as a “tribal chieftain.”

I don't remember where I got the impression, but to recall that President Kennedy and Makarios got along very well during the Archbishop's official visit to Washington. This is in fact another example of the attention being given to Cyprus. Kennedy told him, much to Makarios's chagrin, I assume, that he thought the London-Zurich Agreements were about the best he could get and that he should in effect grin and bear it.

People back here did mistrust Makarios a great deal. He was not yet, at that time, known as “the Red Priest” or “the Red Archbishop”, or the Castro of the Mediterranean”. This mistrust carried over to the Kissinger days.

Q: In an interview with Bill Crawford, regarding the meeting of Kissinger and Makarios in the elevator, Kissinger remarked that "In person, Your Beatitude, you're really very charming." Makarios looked at him and said, "It only lasts a little while."

McCASKILL: Actually, a man who knew Makarios very well, Patroclos Stavrou, told me that Makarios was at heart a royalist. Peter Ramsbottam, the British High Commissioner in Cyprus back a number of years ago, said the same thing in an article he wrote. Stavrou told me that Makarios had pictures of the King and Queen in his bedroom, and that if Makarios were anything, he was a royalist. He was a Cypriot royalist, if we believe these two men who knew him well. He was on fairly good terms with Greek King Constantine, Greece's last king, though I can't remember whether it was Stavrou who told me that or Ramsbottam who mentioned it in his article.

Q: From your vantage point, what were our priorities in that part of the world? Obviously we were concerned about the Soviets, and worried about the southeast flank of NATO. In the Greco-Turkish relationship, we always had to observe a kind of balance. I always had the feeling that Turkey really was the military leader, and we just had to sort of keep the Greeks happy for its real estate, but not much else. What was your feeling?

McCASKILL: As I mentioned earlier, I think our tilt toward Turkey has become institutionalized over the years. I can well understand the military/security priority given to Turkey: its control of the Straits, its long land border with the then-Soviet Union, etc. You only have to go through the Straits as a tourist — as I have — to recognize their strategic value over the centuries. But the Turks have exploited their advantages, as I have said before, and this was always a matter of great chagrin to the Greeks.

The Greeks traditionally point to the fact that they fought with us in both world wars (while Turkey did not), that they have a big Greek-American community here, and on and on. But down deep, I think they have come to accept it. Karamanlis and Andreas Papandreou have both said publicly that "the road from Athens to Washington passes through Ankara"

or something like that. A Greek Foreign Minister, addressing a group of American visitors some years ago, said that if, for the sake of discussion, we accorded Greek and Turkish membership in NATO a weight of 100, Turkey would be 65 of that and Greece would be 35. But, he said, if Greece should withdraw from NATO, Turkey by itself would not be able to carry the whole load, and would not be weighted at 65 by itself.

Over the years, Turkey has created the perception that it is the more dependable ally, due in large part to the influence of the American military. But I wonder if this would bear close scrutiny. For example, I have heard, but never confirmed, that Turkey would not permit us to use our bases in Turkey when we were mounting the effort to free our hostages in Iran. Secondly, Turkey would not allow us to use our bases for the re-supply of our people in Lebanon in 1982-83. And there have three military governments in Turkey since 1960, though Washington Turkologists are quick to point out that Turkish military governments are “different” in that the Turkish military mounts coups to preserve democracy!! I cite all of these things because the Greeks are aware of them and it intensifies their chagrin at what they regard as Turkey's favored position in Washington.

The ratio in military assistance was set at 10 to 7, I believe in 1976, though I am not sure whether it is still in effect. As I remember it, in 1976, a multi-year agreement was negotiated with both Greece and Turkey, but never signed, giving Turkey 1 billion dollars worth of assistance, and 7 hundred million to Greece, an obvious ratio of 10-7. The Greeks grabbed on to this, since it enabled them to maintain some parity with Turkey, which had suffered somewhat from the arms embargo following the invasion of Cyprus in 1974. The Greeks felt that 10-7 was to their advantage, and fought to keep it in effect. As I noted, I do not know whether we still adhere to it, but I think that we do not.

Q: What about the Greek Lobby when you were on the Desk? How did they affect you at that time?

McCASKILL: The Greek Lobby really was mobilized only after the invasion in 1974. They were not a political force when I was on the Desk, though AHEPA and the Archbishop were not averse to throwing their weight around if they thought it would be helpful.

Q: Were there certain Congressmen, particularly of Greek ancestry, sort of on you? Or was that a fairly benign period?

McCASKILL: It was a benign period, as far as that was concerned. We had other worries, of course, that arose when Greece and Turkey almost went to war in 1967 and Secretary Vance went to the area to promote a settlement.

Q: I can't remember which happened first, Vance going out or the April 1967 coup? Which happened first?

McCASKILL: The coup occurred first.

Q: Were you on the Desk at that time:

McCASKILL: I was on the Desk when the coup took place.

Q: Could you talk about how that came? I'm sure you must have been involved and what were the reactions to it?

McCASKILL: Much of this is hazy to me, because we Cyprus types were not directly involved. The Greek Country Directorate, as it had become in 1966, had primary responsibility under the direct supervision of the Assistant Secretary and the Deputy Assistant Secretary.The coup occurred on April 21, 1967. Greece had been terribly unstable politically since Karamanlis resigned in 1963. You may recall that he had some difficulties with the palace over an official visit of Queen Frederika and her daughter Sophia to Britain. The Greek constitution required that the royal family had to secure permission of the government before any member of the Royal Family could travel abroad.

There was a rather famous old Greek Communist, Tony Ambatielos, who had been imprisoned by Greece during the war and who, after his release, was still involved in anti-government activity.

Ambatielos's wife Betty, who I believe was British, was quite active in Britain, particularly in anti-Greek demonstrations, etc. She threatened, with considerable support from communist/leftist groups, to demonstrate again Frederika and Sophia if they visited Britain. I've forgotten the details of the trip, but I believe the British Royal Family had invited Frederika, and I have forgotten why Frederika was so determined to go. But the Karamanlis Government refused to give her permission. She went anyway, there were demonstrations against her, and she and Sophia on one occasion had literally to run from a mob. Karamanlis resigned over the issue — I believe in July of 1963. A caretaker government was formed, elections were held in November, 1963, and George Papandreou obtained a plurality. Since he did not have a working majority, he took a chapter from John Diefenbaker's book and right away dissolved the Parliament and called new elections in February 1964. Papandreou and his liberal party won a good working. I've forgotten what they called the party by then but it was essentially the old Liberal Party.

George Papandreou governed until 1965 when the great “apostasia” occurred: enough of Papandreou's deputies were bought off — and I mean that literally — to bring his government down and from then until the coup in 1967 Greece was in a period of great political instability. There was a succession of weak governments until elections were finally called for May 1967.

It soon became clear that Papandreou was running very, very strong and would probably win. It was being bandied about that if Papandreou were indeed elected, a coup would take place. This centered for the most part on speculation concerning the so-called “palace coup” or “generals' coup”, a coup by a group of high-ranking Greek officers with palace blessing.When the coup finally took place, on April 21, 1967, it was led by three colonels: Papadopoulos, who emerged later as the real brains of the group; Pattakos; and

Makarezos. They were unknown in Washington. I called a contact in Langley the morning the coup occurred and asked who Papadopoulos was. My interlocutor professed not to know, though I think in retrospect that he was probably dissembling with me.

Q: Colonel Papadopoulos was on their payroll at one time but there are a lot of Papadopouloses.

McCASKILL: But it is a fact that my contact told me, and as nearly as I can remember his words, “We don't know who he is.” Let me repeat that we thought that if there were a coup, it would be a palace coup at least with palace blessing. And Embassy Athens was doing what it could to head off that possibility. When it came, it was a real shock here. I would like to say again that the Cyprus people were on the fringes of what was going on — we worked closely with the Greek people, of course — and some of my recollections of this period are hazy.

Q: What was our feeling? I mean once the word came, what were you all doing in NEA in your particular office?

McCASKILL: I think, first, that we — NEA — were trying to figure out who these guys were and what we might expect from them. And, of course, recovering from the shock of a military coup in a NATO country. I learned later, from Merle Miller's biography entitled Lyndon that there was some concern in the American academic community that Andreas Papandreou, whom the junta had imprisoned, would be shot. At J. K. Galbraith's request, Johnson intervened and whether or not that was decisive, Papandreou was obviously not shot. When the exercise was over, Johnson sent a message to Galbraith through Nicholas Katzenbach that “I've told those Greek bastards to lay off that son of a bitch, whoever he is.” Papandreou told this story himself sometime when I was last in the Embassy.

But what the Department was doing, as I recall, was trying to determine who was in charge, what had happened to the democratic process in Greece, whether our old friends

in Greece were in any danger, whether people were being arrested and imprisoned, and so on.

Q: Was there concern about the NATO side of things at that time or was it felt that this was going to be pretty much an internal thing and this wasn't going to affect Greece internationally?

McCASKILL: As I have indicated, I am a bit hazy on much of this. Certainly as I said before, we were concerned that a military coup had taken place in a NATO country. Andreas Papandreou has always said that the colonels used a NATO plan at the base of their own plans. It was considered a very efficient coup as coups go. It was boom-boom and all over and done pretty quickly. I can't remember when the question of recognition came up. The question of military shipments came up — whether these would continue.

I think history has established that what triggered the coup was the fear of the election of George Papandreou and the role of Andreas in the Papandreou Government. You recall that Andreas had returned to Greece in 1959, and had immediately gotten into politics with his father. The Greek military had a deep seated fear and mistrust of Andreas. It was the perception among the military that if George were elected — and it was increasingly apparent that he would be — Andreas would have a key role in the government. The military felt that that would be disastrous for Greece.

Let me give you an example of the influence he had on his father. You recall that Dean Acheson had been asked by George Ball to go to Switzerland in the summer of 1964 to help the parties work out a solution to the Cyprus Problem. He was in fact there for several weeks. This resulted in what has come to be known as the Acheson Plan for Cyprus, generally regarded as an enosis solution, with Cyprus going to Greece in return for the Turkish base I referred to earlier, first in perpetuity, secondly on a 99 year lease.

When I was last stationed in Athens from 1979 to 1983, I heard from two people who were in a position to know — one of them in Papandreou's cabinet — that Papandreou

was prepared to accept the Acheson Plan. According to one version I heard, Papandreou actually informed the cabinet meeting one evening that he was prepared to accept. Then Makarios got to Andreas, Andreas got to his father, and the Prime Minister reversed his decision. There is little doubt that he did have considerable influence on his father. I believe that Christopher Woodhouse, in his little book The Rise and Fall of the Greek Colonels, mentions that Andreas persuaded his father to back away for support for the Acheson Plan.

There was fear in the Greek military that Andreas was “leftist”, “radical”, etc. Papadopoulos and his cohorts were all rabidly anti-communist, actually more than a little unbalanced; they were men who had earned their bars fighting in the communist guerrilla war. I think it is true that a man of Andreas's stripe could have so aroused their fears and suspicions that they took the ultimate extreme of implementing a military coup against the legitimate government of Greece.

Q: What was the reaction from the Cyprus Desk? Here were some ultra nationalists, known to be super nationalists. You were sitting on a powder keg. What was you concern about Cyprus with this new crew in there?

McCASKILL: We were concerned about how they would move, as indeed they did in 1974. Greek Army officers in general were always dedicated to enosis, the union of Cyprus with Greece. They also had a deep mistrust of Makarios, whom they considered “red”. There was a meeting in Alexandroupolis, near the Greek-Turkish border, to try to negotiate an enosis solution. There were other meetings with the Turks where they tried to negotiate an enosis solution, a rather serious effort in Madrid. Makarios was repulsed by the very idea of a military coup, and was as suspicious of the colonels as they were of him. He, Makarios, knew they would try to negotiate a settlement of the problem with the Turks and impose it on the island.

Q: Were the plans for enosis that they were talking to the Turks on of a practical nature did you feel? Was there any chance of anything"

McCASKILL: I would have to go back and check the provisions of various negotiations. I have the recollection that the Greeks were surprised that the Turks did not accept the proposals. Toby Belcher always said that the greatest mistake we made with Makarios was in thinking we — meaning Greece, Turkey, the UK, the US, NATO — could impose a solution on the island. Toby felt, and history proved him right, that Makarios would find a way to scuttle any such efforts. The failure of London-Zurich is itself proof of this, since as I said before, it was Makarios who engineered the scuttling of the Agreements.

Q: What was our reaction as the Papadopoulos regime was beginning to settle in? It was obviously very anti-democratic and aroused an awful lot of opposition, certainly within the European intellectual community, and somewhat within the American academic world. How long were you dealing in NEA at that point?

McCASKILL: Actually I left Cyprus Affairs in the summer of 1967, shortly after the coup occurred. I was assigned to Farsi training in September 1967, with an onward assignment a year later to the Political Section in Tehran. At that time, we were still feeling our way in Greece.

Q: This was not a regime that we (1) expected, or (2) were comfortable with. I served in Greece from 1970 to 1974, when Greeks pointed the finger at us saying "Oh, the CIA did this and this is your government."

McCASKILL: I don't believe that for a minute and have always refused to accept it. I do think it was a surprise to us. I had a dear friend in Northern Greece who said the same thing to me. When I denied it, he told me that he believed me when I denied that I knew anything about a coup. But, he was always quick to add — and we discussed this more than once — I was too junior to be privy to that kind of information. You are right; it was

a government that we had not expected and we were not comfortable with it. I think we grew more comfortable with it later. Greeks were always quick to point to the number of high level visitors to Greece, including Spiro Agnew. As you know, the Greeks must blame somebody for their problems, and this was a good example of that unfortunate trait.

Q: It is one of their traits. So what prompted you to go into Farsi training, and go to Iran where you served from 1968 to 1972? What got you going on that?

McCASKILL: I felt I needed to get out of Greek-Turkish-Cyprus affairs, and the Number Two job in the Political Section in Tehran was opening up. I would ordinarily have gone out in the summer of 1967, but the incumbent extended for a year, leaving me in limbo since I had given up my Cyprus job. The NEA Personnel Officer, then Orme Wilson, suggested that I go to Farsi training.

I ended up getting a 3-3 in Farsi, which delighted me since I was the oldest of the three students and the other two were really very good language students. The tutor told me later that they rated me second among the three, which pleased me no end. But then he might have told the other guy the same thing for all I know.

Q: You were in Iran from 1968 to 1972. What was the situation there at this point?

McCASKILL: Iran was a strange place in many ways. I worked very hard the four years we were there, and at the end I did not feel that I left many friends there, Iranian, that is. The Iranians were hard to get close to. Life was good, housing was good and easy to find. The Shah was a fascinating figure. But there was really very little for political officers to do in Tehran because our ability to get around was limited. For example, we talk about the mullahs today: I doubt if anybody in the Embassy ever knew a mullah. They were inaccessible to us. We speak or spoke about the Bazaaris; again, nobody in the Embassy knew any Bazaaris. If we had wandered around the bazaars, somebody would have reported it to SAVAK, the Shah's secret police, and we would have had a fairly severe reaction from the government. In the Embassy, we knew a small number of the

establishment — government types, “politicians” (and I put that in quotation marks since there was no politics as we know it), bankers/merchants, etc.

And, of course, reporting was circumscribed in the Embassy. There were some things just not reported. For example, a young officer in the Political Section prepared an airgram to the effect that things were not as rosy in Iran as some of our reporting indicated and as some people seemed to believe. The airgram, not seen in the front office until after it went out, caused great consternation there. An instruction subsequently came down that nothing was to go out of the Political Section without the Political Counselor's clearance. This in turn caused some chagrin in the Political Section. We felt that the Embassy's reporting was not altogether honest.

Q: This brings up something that recurs all the time but particularly during the latter part of the Nixon Administration. Kissinger didn't want to hear anything bad. What was your feeling?

Mr. McCaskill. I think that is true. Let me cite an example. I did a memorandum of conversation one time based on a conversation with an Iranian journalist representing an American wire service who was very pro-American, pro-Western, who spoke good English, etc. The memorandum covered several subjects, one entitled “Military Trials” or something to that effect. My interlocutor had told me that there were political trials every day in the military courts because the civil courts were full. The Political Counselor, my boss and a friend of mine, would not approve the memcon, despite my protestations that I was only reporting what my contact had told me. When I asked why it could not go, he replied that there were some people in the Department and the White House, and possibly others, who did not want to read anything unpleasant about Iran and did not want anything detrimental to Iran to circulate in Washington. There were some people in Washington, particularly on the Hill, looking for such things.

At a Chiefs of Mission Conference in Iran in 1969 or 1970 when I was the note taker, I heard the old cliche that Iran was “an island of stability in a troubled area” a number of times. I think sincerely that this was our policy, based on inadequate reporting. We simply did not want to report anything to the contrary.

Q: There are two things here, extremely important. One is that you don't want to rock the boat, create waves, and you won't be paid attention to. That's one reason why one wouldn't report unpleasant things. The other is even though you might feel — this is often the case of corruption or something like that — if you report it back to Washington, the way paper multiplies, that it will end up and be used against the regime even though there may be mitigating circumstances. The other one is you don't want to make people unhappy.

McCASKILL: I think it was more of the second in the case of Iran. I think there were people in Washington looking critically at Iran from time to time. And I think were was a genuine belief offsetting that that the Shah was our best bet in that part of the world and we did not want to report anything that reflected on him. We did not want anything to upset the flow of arms, so to speak. I think there was a very strong feeling that he was our man in that part of the world. We put a lot of time and effort into the Iranian army and air force, even though we used to joke in the Embassy that that fiercest of armies in that part of the world had never heard a shot fired in anger. But to repeat, we did not want anything to reflect unfavorably on the Shah, did not want to report anything unpleasant.

Q: Let's talk about the Political Section. I have an interview with Andrew Killgore who talks about his great frustration at the time when he was in the Political Section that he was told just what he could not report. This is what we're trained to do. You came from a place where you were reporting, and you were talking to everybody in Cyprus from all accounts, and here you are in this never-never world where you said you were a political reporter who essentially did not report. Also talk particularly about the junior officer.

McCASKILL: Well, it was the more junior officers that it affected mostly. The most meaningful reporting was done by the Ambassador and/or the DCM and the Political Counselor. Only the Ambassador saw the Shah, the Minister of Court and the Foreign Minister. The DCM ran the Embassy, really, a sort of executive officer.I was fortunate my last two years to be given responsibility for reporting on the Persian Gulf. The British had announced publicly that they were pulling out East of Suez, and Iran was being armed by us and groomed by the British to fill the void when the Brits left. This was an extremely important reporting function at the time, since there were significant developments every two or three days. The career man in the Foreign Ministry responsible for the Gulf on the Iranian side was apparently under orders to keep us completely informed.

The junior officers did the domestic reporting, such as it was. One junior officer was assigned to do bio reporting and almost nothing else. As a result, we had the most extensive bio files I ever saw anywhere. It was one of those junior officers who wrote the youth airgram that caused the front office flap.

Q: Who was that?

McCASKILL: Arnie Raphel, who, you may remember, died in that plane crash in Pakistan.

Q: He was Ambassador to Pakistan?

McCASKILL: Yes, Ambassador to Pakistan. He was a brilliant officer who was a pleasure to work with. It was his airgram that raised the front office's hackles.

Q: In the cold light of day, away from all of this, it sort of negates everything we're supposed to be doing. Obviously, we're all operating under orders, but when you see the obvious disaster ten years later, you must wonder.

McCASKILL: Iran is an obvious case where you can look back and ask “Who lost Iran, when did we lose Iran?” I think there was some genuine belief in Washington that Iran

was the “island of stability”, based in part on inadequate reporting from the Embassy over a long period. For his part, the Shah was surrounded by sycophants who told him what he wanted to hear. I've done almost no reading on Iran since I retired since I have been preoccupied with writing and lecturing on Cyprus. So I don't know what the experts and scholars are saying. And it may be a long time before the real story is told. I do know that the initial mistake may have been the overthrow of Mossadegh and the restoration of the Shah to the throne in 1953.

Q: I hope we can use some of these conversations we're having for future political officers to absorb how things happen. You say we couldn't get to the mullahs, couldn't get to the Bazaaris. Do you see any way at that time that we could have done more in getting to those people? Were there any restrictions? Or was it just language, cultural? What was stopping us from getting out, putting some junior officers out?

McCASKILL: If we had put junior officers out wandering around the bazaars, talking to people in the bazaars, and so on, somebody would have reported it to SAVAK, the secret police, who would have reported it to the Palace. In the first place, those mullahs and Bazaaris were very xenophobic, as the last 10-15 years have shown. Secondly, as I noted, SAVAK would have picked it up.

Q: And then what would have happened?

McCASKILL: And then SAVAK would have reported it, and somebody in the government would have said to somebody in the Embassy, “Look, one of your guys has been wandering around asking embarrassing questions and nosing around, and we don't want that. If you want to know something, ask us and we'll tell you.” And I'm serious. The young officer might well have found himself with another assignment in another country. There is, I believe, at least one case where this happened to a junior officer, a Farsi language officer who was a bit too active.

Q: I understand completely. A couple of things about the climate at that time. We had a huge American community didn't we?

McCASKILL: Yes.

Q: And these were essentially gung-ho Americans, perhaps not very sophisticated, probably anathema to the mullahs. This is the wrong group to plunk in the middle of a nation with so many zealots in it. Were we monitoring this, or did these people tend to "screw up the works"?

McCASKILL: I don't remember any specific such cases. It was all pretty well policed. Certainly the military policed itself closely. There was a large American Club complex, with a big club house and restaurant, swimming pool, tennis courts. There was even a teen club where American teenagers could hang out, and that was healthy. The noncoms had their own big club.

There were several American military installations around the city well known as such. There was a rod and gun club, and since my boys and I liked fishing and hunting, it was a place we would go on a Sunday afternoon. And, of course, there was a big American school; this was not a military school while I was there, but the military was increasingly anxious to have it so classified since then the military would run it.

The commanding officer of the Military Assistance Advisory Group, the MAAG, was a two-star general. I can't remember how big the mission was altogether, but it was considerable. But I don't remember any untoward incidents involving the military. There were times when one wondered who ran the show, the military or the Embassy. I served in two countries with large military missions, Iran and Greece, and we had a navy contingent in Cyprus. India was the only country in which I served in which there was no US military presence, and I thought it was purer foreign service experience, without the military presence, if I might put it that way.

Finally, there was a relatively large big business community, most of it oil-related. The oil people were relatively unsophisticated, but they were also quite careful as I remember. One time when I was duty officer, an American oil company employee, a rather pleasant middle-aged man, hit somebody with his car and we had to get him out of Iran because there was always the possibility of a reaction. But offhand, I don't remember any untoward incidents among the business/oil people.

Q: What was the impression in the Political Section of the Shah at that time? And his program?

McCASKILL: The Shah had done some very admirable things. He had a reform program, called the White Revolution, in which draftees were given a sort of alternative service; instead of going in to the military, they did such things as teach, serve as medical technicians in villages without doctors, and so on. I have forgotten the number of such corps, but they really seemed to be making a difference. The Shah had also begun land reform, which had not gotten very far since the old landlord class was extremely powerful in the country.

But the Shah was authoritarian at heart. I mentioned that he had surrounded himself with sycophants who told him what he wanted to hear. He had no common touch and was cut off from what was going on. He had allowed so-called political parties but it was all a sham since the candidates were all hand-picked, the elections a farce, all a charade.

The Shah told Ambassador Armin Meyer one time that the Iranians were not “ready for democracy.” The Americans were always pushing him toward more and more democracy but did not understand that the Iranians were not ready for it, he said. I think the Shah believed that. I am a little at a loss to know what I believe since the revolution. After seeing what has happened, the Shah may have been right all along. Maybe they weren't ready. While the so-called parliament was really kind of ludicrous, maybe he was trying to

“bring them along.” But maybe they weren't ready for democracy. Maybe they still are not ready. . . .

Q: What was your impression of how Armin Meyer operated, the first ambassador when you were there.

McCASKILL: I liked him very much, and thought he was an excellent career ambassador. He seemed to have a good rapport with the Shah and members of the government. The second ambassador I served under was Ambassador MacArthur.

Q: Douglas MacArthur II.

McCASKILL: Yes. I never felt as close to him as I did to Ambassador Meyer. Ambassador MacArthur was a very cold, demanding man. His Embassy was just not a very nice place to work. The third ambassador was a political appointee, Joe Farland, I believe from West Virginia.

Q: How did MacArthur relate to the Iranians from your vantage point?

McCASKILL: We had the feeling in the Embassy that he never really liked Iran. The rumor around the Embassy was that he had not wanted to come to Tehran (his previous post was in Europe, I believe.) He was said to think of himself as more a European man, and he just never seemed to relate to Iran. This may be terribly unfair since, as I said, I wasn't very close to him. I do know of one instance where he treated his staff aide and the two front office secretaries very, very shabbily over something very minor.

I think his attitude toward Iran may have been colored by the attack on his life by the Iranian urban guerrillas.

Q: We're trying to get a feel for the Foreign Service world, and Mrs. MacArthur was known as one of the dragons in the Foreign Service. Did this have any effect? I mean her demands. Did this permeate the Embassy, or was this a problem? Did it bother people?

McCASKILL: We had heard rumors of Mrs. MacArthur's reputation long before she arrived in Tehran. I think her worst days may have been behind her when she got there. But she showed some signs of her reputation from time to time, and one who crossed her — unknowingly — regretted it. As you know, an ambassador's wife can make life miserable for the staff, but in truth I think Mrs. MacArthur's toughest days were behind her.

Q: How did we view the Soviet problem from Iran?

McCASKILL: The increasing commercial relations between Iran and the Soviet Union when I was there were a great concern to Ambassador MacArthur, who seemed to be viewing the Soviet Union from Vienna rather than from Tehran. As the foreign relations type in the Political Section I had to compile, every month, a list of commercial transactions between the Soviet Union and Iran. I asked my boss to try to talk him out of it, to tell him that this was nothing new. I thought then, and continue to think now, that he was reading far too much into something relatively insignificant.

Something brought to his attention that there was considerable trade between the two countries, and he wanted it followed in some detail. I think after a few months of reading the same thing he began to see that it was nothing to get steamed up about. The Iranians were wary of the Soviets, dating back to 1946. Iran and the Soviet Union were, after all, neighbors, and the volume of trade between them was relatively significant.

Q: Did you see — I think they were called the Mujahideen — the communist guerrillas who tried to kill MacArthur, was this a particular problem?

McCASKILL: This is what I referred to a bit ago, but I think they were called “urban Guerrillas” then, a movement that grew fairly rapidly the last two years I was there. I do not recalled that they were known as the Mujahideen then.

Anyway, as I understood it at the time, Ambassador and Mrs. MacArthur had a very close call. As I heard the story in the Embassy — and it was kept quiet for a long time — it was a classic maneuver, with the guerrillas' cars forcing the Ambassador's car to the side of the road next to the jube, the open water drain carrying water from the hills down through the town. One car was in front, one in back. As I heard it, several armed men got out of the car in the rear and started toward the Ambassador's car. At that moment, the Ambassador's driver noticed that he had just enough space between the front car and the jube to get through, and he gunned the Cadillac as fast as he could and got out. I was told that Ambassador MacArthur always felt that his driver saved his and Mrs. MacArthur's lives. I heard that the gunmen opened fire on the Ambassador's car and that shots ricocheted around inside the car.

Then when Nixon and Kissinger came to Tehran in 1972, we had a couple of shootings. The commanding officer of the Air Force section of the MAAG had a bomb rolled under his car; the explosion killed his driver and broke both of his legs. Then at the tomb of the Shah's father (I think that is what it was), a bomb exploded there shortly before Nixon was to visit the tomb. Obviously that stop on the schedule was canceled. I seem to recall another shooting at the time of the visit, but I can not recall just what it was. This was all in May, 1972.

Q: The visit of Nixon and Kissinger later on was a sort of by-blow of a visit to the Soviet Union at that time?

McCASKILL: He went to Romania and the Soviet Union, but he was in Tehran for a couple of days.

Q: From what I gather practically a blank check was given to the Shah.

McCASKILL: That's what I was about to say; that's when the so-called blank check for military assistance was given to him. This was supposed to be the opening of the floodgates. Former British Ambassador Dennis Wright, at one time the British Foreign Office's foremost Iranologist, fluent in Farsi and close to the Shah, told me in 1976 or 1977 when I saw him in India that he thought the Shah had “gone off the track” in 1973 with the great rise in oil prices after the embargo. The Shah really began to “lose his bearings” then, Ambassador Wright thought, and really began to lose touch with reality. Ambassador Wright had retired by the time we met, but I place some stock in his opinion in view of his long experience in Iran over a number of years and his closeness to the Shah.

Q: What was the view of Iraq during 1968 to 1972 when you were there?

McCASKILL: We followed relations with Iraq very closely, as did the Iranians. General Bakhtiar, a former chief of SAVAK who had broken with the Shah, had been given refuge in Iraq and the Shah seemed to expect the general to cross the border with his forces at any time. And there was the question of Iranian and Israeli support for the Iraqi Kurds. The Kurds were actually fairly active in those days under a colorful figure Mustapha Barzani. It was well known that Israel was furnishing arms to the Kurds through Iran.

And of course, the old perennial between Iran and Iraq, the Shatt-al-Arab River which formed the boundary between the two countries in the south. When the British withdrew from the area in the 1930's, they arbitrarily fixed the border between the two countries at the high water mark on the Iranian side of the river, rather than at the thalweg or channel of the river. This meant, of course, that the entire river was in Iraq. They did this, I was told, so that Basra would have responsibility for maintaining and dredging the river, keeping it clear. In international law, when a river is a boundary, the thalweg is normally recognized and you will find few cases where the border is at the high water mark. This was a real source of bitterness to the Iranians, and in truth I always felt they

had a legitimate gripe. In any case, the two countries had arrived at a settlement in 1969, when the Shah declared that the border was to be at the thalweg, or channel, and Iraq accepted it.

One of the more interesting developments vis-a-visIraq when I was there was the apparent decision by Iraq to allow the Iraqi Jews to leave the country. While some of them seemed to “escape” at first, we concluded that the Iraqis were closing their eyes to the Jews' exit. The Jewish community of Baghdad was one of the most famous in that part of the world, a very prominent community, wealthy, solid.

I was fortunate enough to meet one of the first families to get out, the Shemtob family. One of the two brothers, Jacob, had been living in London for many years; he returned to Iraq to visit his brother and sister, and could not get an exit permit to leave. Jacob masterminded the flight for the family — four adults and four children, as I recall — by presumably arranging a summer vacation for the family in the mountains to escape the heat of Baghdad. He had previously contacted Kurdish groups in the mountains, into whose hands the Shemtobs placed themselves. They literally went underground with the Kurds, and finally worked their way to the Iran-Iraq border, where they were pretty well welcomed by the Iranian border forces. They were the first of a rather large number of Iraqi Jews who got out that way. Jacob actually set up this pipeline which many of the Jewish community used to escape the country. I think the Shemtobs may have been the first family to use the underground Jacob had established rather than “one of the first”, and Jacob deserved considerable credit for having started it.It was an exciting and interesting development and I was pleased to have been involved to some slight degree and happy to have gotten to know the Shemtobs. As a footnote, the Jewish agencies were very well provided for in Tehran, and received the full cooperation of the Iranian authorities. And, it was said, with the full knowledge of the Shah. The Jewish agencies welcomed those coming through and arranged their onward travel to Israel, the U.S. or wherever they were going. My wife and I had the Shemtobs in for dinner one evening, and had a wonderful evening with them. They were very cultured, refined people who had lived under constant

threat in Baghdad. You remember that four Jews — I think it was four — were hung in the square of Baghdad in 1968 or thereabouts on trumped up charges. That was the kind of threat the Shemtobs lived under.

I have not followed this question in the 25 years since I was there, and do not know what has been revealed since that time. But, as I said, we concluded in the Embassy that the Iraqis probably decided that holding the community hostage was no longer worth the trouble and closed their eyes to the Jews' departure. This in no way minimizes what the Shemtobs and other Jewish families did, since going into the underground to get out required considerable nerve and daring.

Q: How was Vietnam playing in Iran from the people you talked to?

McCASKILL: I don't remember a thing.

Q: That's a good answer: it didn't play. Is there anything else we should talk about?

McCASKILL: I don't think so. I can't think of anything.

Q: I must say I've never known anybody who really stuck to one area, Near Eastern Affairs, as you did the entire time. And you really covered it. You went to Bombay, 1972 to 1976. What about this assignment?

McCASKILL: I had completed four years in Iran, and the Department informed me that the Number Two job in the Consulate General there was open and asked if I would like to be assigned there. It was considered a pretty good job. This was before open assignments, when things were much easier I thought. I accepted and went there in July of 1972 on direct transfer from Iran.While I went on direct transfer, the Department authorized some consultation in Washington which enabled me to visit my mother who died before I would have gotten home on leave the next year. This was one of the reasons I loved NEA; we may have been in-bred and incestuous, but NEA looked out for its own. I think

Howie Schaffer, who was NEA Personnel Officer at the time, was behind it. I have never discussed it with him, but I have always been grateful to him or whoever did it.

To get back to Bombay, the job turned out to be a good job, and we stayed there until March, 1976 when I went over to Madras as Consul General.

Q: What were you doing in Bombay?

McCASKILL: I was economic-commercial, but more economic than commercial, since we had a full time commercial officer. It was a relatively big consulate general, and I backed up the Consul General in many ways. I helped supervise the consular section sometime, since we had lots of consular work there. The job was really a Deputy Principal Officer job, and I believe it was actually called that before I left.

Q: Who was Consul General most of the time?

McCASKILL: David Bane for about half of my tour. He was succeeded by Bill Courtney. David had been Ambassador in Gabon, and before that Consul General in Lahore. He told me he thought the Bombay job was underrated. Bombay was an exciting city in which to serve: big, dirty, crowded, filthy, but exciting and fascinating with lots of interesting people who were easily accessible.

Q: What was the situation in Western India at the time you were there?

McCASKILL: Things were not altogether easy for Americans then. Remember that this was just after the Indo-Pak War in 1971, when the U.S. tilted toward Pakistan.

Q: This was Kissinger's famous tilt toward Pakistan.

McCASKILL: Yes. You may remember that the Soviets rushed in in support of the Indians. There was considerable anti-Americanism all over India. Still we could get around and see people. The Indians had a way of giving us the needle whenever they could; they

professed not to understand how we could support Pakistan over India, “the largest democracy in the world.” They never let us forget that. And Soviet influence was strong.

Q: You say that Soviet influence was strong. Who was the Prime Minister?

McCASKILL: Indira Gandhi.

Q: I would have thought that the mating of India and the Soviet Union an unlikely one.

McCASKILL: It was an unlikely mating, but the Soviets were quick to exploit the situation. For example, India had been in the midst of a severe drought when I arrived. The monsoon had not been good, and the wheat and rice crops had both been off for a number of years. The so-called “Green Revolution” had not yet taken hold and India needed wheat rather badly. Who provided this wheat? The Soviet Union. And at a time when the Soviets were buying wheat from us. A Greek merchant captain whose ship brought “Soviet” grain to India told me in Bombay that he was certain that the wheat being shipped to India from the Soviet Union was American wheat. We did not pursue this since but it is an interesting question. He told me he had seen American ships unloading American wheat into the same facility out of which he loaded wheat for India. Indira Gandhi publicly stated that the Soviets were always a friend in need for India. When India needed friends in 1971, she said, and the Soviets were there. By the time I got there, the Soviets were the principal arms supplier for India, whether by grant or on credit. The huge steel mill in eastern India was built by the Soviets. It served the Indians right, but I understood from some Indian business friends that India got old, outdated technology in the steel mill. You'd see Soviet missions of various kinds all over the country.

Q: Were the Indian intellectuals comfortable? Were the people you talked to comfortable with talking about their great brother, the Soviets?

McCASKILL: The people we socialized with did not see a lot of the Soviets. The Indian educated elite much preferred Americans to Soviets, there was no doubt of that. But

journalists, for example, felt comfortable with Soviets and with the Indo-Soviet friendship. I will tell you an interesting anecdote that illustrates Indian thinking.

I was having lunch one day with the editor of an Indian paper in Bombay, a very nice, likeable man supposedly very close to Indira Gandhi. He said to me that we Americans had never understood nonalignment. Americans had always felt that nonalignment means being equidistant from the great powers, being, in fact, in the middle. Indians felt that nonalignment did not mean equal distance between the great powers and that, in fact, “you can be more equidistant or less equidistant.” I know what he meant, but it struck me at the time as rather humorous and typical of the fuzzy wuzzy way Indians tended to think — more equidistant or less equidistant!!

Q: Particularly in the upper classes the Indians enjoy talking. Was this a strain sometimes? As a consular officer did you find things got talked to death?

McCASKILL: No. Indians were really very good conversationalists, very good company, if more than a little self-righteous and insensitive at times. As I think I noted, upper class Indians felt much closer to the United States than to the Soviet Union and the Soviets. Upper class Indians liked good food, good conversation and good company. But, as I said, they could be insensitive and even rude.

One evening at a lovely dinner party, shortly after we had arrived in Bombay, a young Parsi doctor was telling me, in perfect English, how much he and his wife loved the U.S. They loved the U.S. and the American people he said, but “I don't like your President very much.” I was so taken aback by this that I didn't defend my President adequately, and it bothered me. It never dawned on him that it was rude of him to say something like that to an American diplomat.

While I never had the occasion to use it, I decided that if another Indian ever said that to me, I would reply that I knew lots of Americans who loved India and the Indian people, but didn't like Indira Gandhi very much.

Still, we left more good, close friends in India than we did in any of our other posts, so I may be the one who is being insensitive here.

Q: You were there during the Watergate period. Was there understanding of what it was all about. I was in Greece at the time and the Greeks never understood what Watergate was about.

McCASKILL: The Indians did not understand Watergate. Most Indian politicians are corrupt, so they could not understand what Watergate was all about.

Q: Watergate was sort of small potatoes from most other countries' point of view.

McCASKILL: As big as India is, it could be terribly parochial in many ways. India bought some foodgrains from us in late 1973 or thereabouts, and found that one shipment had Jimsonweed in it. Jimsonweed, known as “loco weed” in the American West, is poisonous to humans. Indians bought the grain for human consumption, so people receiving it had to pick out every grain of the Jimsonweed before they could eat it. This received a tremendous play in the press all over India, with the press implying if not stating openly that we had taken the Indians on this or that we had had some evil motive in selling India grain that was laced with Jimsonweed.

In fact, India had bought very cheap, inferior foodgrains which were known to our grain people in the States to contain Jimsonweed. The GOI had cut corners and was then trying to blame us for what happened. It was a good example of getting what you pay for. That is the kind of thing that would get a tremendous press play in India, while Watergate received no attention.

Q: Did the ConGen staff adopt a wait-and-see, "this too shall pass" attitude at this time. These things come and go with Indo-American relations.

McCASKILL: I think we did, since things seemed to be improving. But Mrs. Gandhi never really liked us, and we had that to contend with.

Q: How did we view the Communist Party? Did we see the communists ever taking over India?

McCASKILL: No. The party was there and from time to time would lead demonstrations by the consulate protesting such things as the Allende ouster in Chile. We would always close the gates when demonstrations occurred and disregard the demonstrators. Once when I was in charge the young Political Officer suggested that we accept the demonstrators' petition. I think it was one of those "Allende" demonstrations. I refused to accept it on the ground that accepting it would imply involvement that we were not guilty of. The Embassy telephoned down to ask how I was handling it and agreed entirely with my approach.

There were actually two communist parties in India: the CPI, the Communist Party of India, the "usual" type party, and the Marxist party, the CPM.

Q: Patrick Moynihan was the Ambassador for a while when you were there. Did you get any feel for how he operated?Or was he too far away?

McCASKILL: I need not say that Ambassador Moynihan was and is a great mind, admired far and near for his great intellect. But he was a difficult man to work for. I knew his staff aide rather well, and he told me just how unpredictable, how volatile Moynihan was. It was impossible for the staff aide to predict his reactions. I think his main goal when he went to India was to negotiate the Indian indebtedness to us off the books. I've forgotten the precise figure, but on the books, we had something like 2-3 billion dollars of PL 480 money. Moynihan felt that our relations with India would never improve as long as the

Indians felt indebted to us. It was a tough negotiation, but it was a successful one and he and the economic staff of the Embassy deserved a lot of credit.

Indians liked him because they saw him as a real intellectual. But on the personal side, being in Bombay was about as close as I wanted to be to him, 3-4 hours away by air.

Q: We are continuing November 11, 1993. You were in Madras from 1976 to 1979. What were you doing there?

McCASKILL: I was Consul General in Madras. The previous incumbent, Jack Eaves, left rather suddenly to become DCM in Kathmandu. When Jack left, Ambassador Saxbe, who had replaced Moynihan, asked me to go to Madras as CG. I was ready to leave Bombay, and I felt that South India was sufficiently different from Western India that it would be like a new assignment. And of course there was the satisfaction of going from Number Two to Number One.

Q: How did you find your staff there?

McCASKILL: The American staff when I arrived there was adequate, with some strong points and some weak ones. The young administrative officer was quite good, the best member of the staff. The Indian national staff was outstanding, easily the best national staff of my career.

Q: We're talking about 1976 to 1979. Could you tell me in the first place what your consular district covered? And what was the situation, economic and political?

McCASKILL: The Madras Consular District consisted of four states: Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Kerala. Each had its separate language. At the time of my transfer, Tamil Nadu was governed from Delhi, under what was called “President's Rule”. The leader of the regional party in power in Tamil Nadu was at odds with Mrs. Gandhi and she summarily dismissed him and initiated rule of the state from Delhi. This was during the

period of the “Emergency”, the suspension of parliamentary government in India and rule by Indira Gandhi. This authoritarian rule, for which “The Emergency” was a euphemism, had been imposed in 1975 by Mrs. Gandhi, when she took the full rule of the country into her hands, really executing a bloodless coup. This was a very dark day for India. I should point out that “President's Rule”, under which the government in Delhi could dismiss a state government, did not start with the Emergency; I do not know its history, but it is the kind of thing that could come from the Brits.

Anyway, when I arrived in Madras, Tamil Nadu was under President's Rule. There were two men from Delhi, very senior career civil servants, actually running the state. I established rather good contacts with one of them, an excellent man by the name of P. K. Dave, as I mentioned a senior career government official.

The consular district had a population of 150 million people. Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka were generally in Mrs. Gandhi's camp (Mrs. Gandhi's party was the Congress Party, the old party of her father); at the time I arrived, the Congress Party was in power in Kerala, but with a very slim majority. The communists were very strong in that state, as you may recall. When Mrs. Gandhi lifted President's Rule in Tamil Nadu, another regional party was elected and governed the state for a number of years. A regional party was elected in Andhra Pradesh a few years later. Interestingly, the leaders in both states were movie actors, said to derive their political power from their exposure throughout their states in movies.

We need not go into the details here, but the leader of Tamil Nadu had had a very long movie career in which he always played the good guy, and in his films, good always triumphed over evil. His movies were quite simple but the villagers reportedly loved them. Local Madras pundits told me that the villages tended to blur the movie man with the real man. Whatever the reason he was Chief Minister, which was the title of the leader of the state government, a good many years.

Q: As the Consul General, was there much interest in the American connection? How did you deal with these poor states?

McCASKILL: I like to think I was fairly well known and relatively popular. We had lots of travel money left over from the counterpart funds, and I tried to visit each state capital every six months for three or four days. I had three Indian national political employees: one for Andhra Pradesh, one for Karnataka, and one for Tamil Nadu and Kerala. They all were excellent, and knew whom I should see and whom I should not see. They would make appointments ahead of time, USIS would get my visit and maybe a picture, in the papers. It was a very good public relations operation, even if I do say so. We used to joke in the office that I was probably the best known foreigner in South India, which was something when you consider the size of the area.

On the personal side, I liked the South very much. It was a great tourist area, with lots to be seen, including some magnificent old Hindu temples. I set up a train trip for Ambassador Saxbe, on which we had several private railway cars which were dropped off in a tourist center, and later tacked on to the back of another train a day later. It was a wonderful way to travel, and sort of took us back to the days of the British Raj. Word of the trip got around, and a number of other people in the Embassy asked me to arrange one for them. It was a once-in-a-lifetime kind of thing, something that could probably only be done in India. As a footnote, the Indian Railways were quite good, and the service provided for the VIP bogey was outstanding.

Q: Didn't Kerala have a communist government at one time, and wasn't that an irritant to us, a communist government in this big democracy during the Cold War. I recall that it was the focus of a lot of attention. Did you give Kerala more attention because of that, or had our concerns dissipated?

McCASKILL: Our concerns regarding that had largely dissipated by then. I don't remember specifically but it is my general recollection that my relations with those communists I

met were fairly cordial. I don't recall meeting many of them, in fact.The Soviets had a big consulate in Madras, and their CG and I became fairly good friends. He mentioned one time, I suppose at a party, that he was traveling over to Kerala. I kidded him that he went to Kerala a lot more than I did, and I asked what he did there; did he call on all those communist leaders over there? He responded quite openly that “of course” he did. You call on the Congress people, he said to me, and I call on the Communists. He went on good-naturedly, “What do you think I do?” This man and his wife were very decent, likable people, and we figured that he was probably a career foreign service type; his number two was a bull, however, as subtle as a 47-ton tank. We concluded that he was KGB.

To return to your original question, I don't recall that we were concerned about Kerala when I was there. I think we had learned to live with it. As you know, India took some getting used to, but it could also be a wonderful, fascinating place to serve. Obviously I was not a career subcontinent type, but I did learn to love India.As a footnote, Krishna Menon, who succeeded in antagonizing nearly everybody at the UN in the late 1950s and early 1960s was a typical, fuzzy Keralan.

Q: Later, particularly today, the Tamil problem spills over to Sri Lanka. How did we look on the Tamil separatist movement at that time?

McCASKILL: We did not focus on it when I was there. There had been language riots in Tamil Nadu as recently as 1966-69, and resentment on the language issue continues below the surface to this day. But I don't recall any focus on the separatist movement. Once I asked a close friend, a London School of Economics graduate, if the language problem bothered him. I was surprised when he answered affirmatively and vigorously. But I don't remember seeing anything on the separatist movement then.

Q: Madras must have seemed far, far from Delhi in many ways. How did we look upon Indira Gandhi at that time? What was the general opinion of how she was governing?

McCASKILL: Mrs. Gandhi was the Congress Party. She was, surprisingly, fairly popular in Tamil Nadu. After she imposed the Emergency in 1975, when she would call elections was the burning question. I think I mentioned that the Congress was strong in Andhra and Karnataka, less so in Kerala. Intellectuals and educated Indians deeply resented the imposition of authoritarian rule, and repudiated Indira Gandhi at the ballot box when she called elections for 1977. We concluded, I think, that she had so cut herself off from the electorate that she had no idea that she would be so soundly rejected. It was obviously a gross miscalculation on her part.I personally went to India with no preconceived notions about her or the country, and I left loving the country and with a very low opinion of her. She was a very political animal, but I didn't think she was terribly smart. She certainly had no vision of where the country would go, or where it needed to go, except to keep her in power. I was always surprised that such a big country produced so few leaders; American Indologists could probably explain this, but I never could. In a country of 600 million then — it's considerably bigger now — there were very few political leaders. The Indian business community was an outstanding group, and I knew some very able businessmen in Bombay and Madras but they avoided politics.

Q: We obviously have all kinds of differences with the Indians. When you called on Congress Party leaders, what would you talk about? Was there anything special you were pitching? Or was it really just how things were going?

McCASKILL: Much of our discussions concerned the general situation in the states, or a particular situation between states. And a great deal of local stuff. I would not have dared, on an official call, to ask one of them what he thought of Mrs. Gandhi, for example. Overly-sensitive Indians would have been quick to consider that interfering. I would take my time, and sometimes some very interesting material would come out. I would sometimes get into state elections, but one had to be careful since they were so sensitive about what they considered interference in internal affairs. I think I actually generated some trust among some of my contacts. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, the movie actor to whom I

referred, and I were fairly close. He had needed eye surgery, and I went out of my way to help his people arrange things for him and to give him a good reception, even though he was the equivalent of a state governor.

A word on the “prickly” relationship;. It was prickly, but at the same time it was a sort of love-hate relationship between Indians and Americans. They seemed almost hurt that we didn't give them more attention. And they never forgot the tilt of 1971. They could never understand why the world's greatest democracy did not support the world's largest democracy.

Q: You mentioned the press. How did you deal with the press? Did it worry you that there were land mines everywhere you stepped as far as the press was concerned?

McCASKILL: Yes. I had to be very careful. I did not deal with the press any more than I had to, and I left that to our very good USIS office in Madras. I actually stayed away from the press fairly much. I did have one incident when I was on a speaking tour in an isolated provincial town and something I said was taken out of context and blown up in the press all over the country.

When Ambassador Saxbe arrived in India in early 1975, he let it be known that he was not really looking for Mrs. Gandhi to persuade her of anything or to offer her anything. He had not come to India bearing gifts, he let it be known, and he had no US assistance to be “forced” on India. He sort of put it out that if Mrs. Gandhi wanted him, he would be on the golf course playing golf or in Kashmir fishing. I thought his approach was just right for the time. The Indians were very sensitive to what they perceived as our “forcing” aid on them, and I think Ambassador Saxbe played it just right.

Q: Over the years, Indians have perceived that the Republicans have tilted more to Pakistan and Democratic administrations are more inclined to support India. You were in Madras when the Carter Administration came in. In addition to the hoped-for tilt, Carter

had a personal tie with India through his mother who had served in the Peace Corps there. In your area, did you see any positive or negatives about the Carter Administration?

McCASKILL: I think there was the feeling that you described, that the Democrats were more pro-India than the Republicans, and in general, our relations were better under Carter. Remember, too, that Morarji Desai had succeeded Mrs. Gandhi, and that was a definite plus as far as our relations were concerned. The most impressive thing Carter did was the appointment of Ambassador Goheen to Delhi. Ambassador Goheen was born in India, the son of a medical missionary. I think some of his grandparents had been missionaries. He had long, deep ties with India, and a deep affection for the country and the people. He said when he presented his credentials that he was deeply touched to be representing his country in the land of his birth.

I think he was tremendously effective, as word of his “Indian connection” was widespread. He and I went to Andhra Pradesh to what had been a TB sanitarium where his father had performed thoracic surgery many years before. Dr. Goheen's first patient was found and attended the program the sanitarium had set up. Ambassador Goheen told me that his family's long ties with India meant a great deal to him and he was indeed very proud of them.

To repeat for emphasis, he was a fine ambassador and a fine man, and I was glad I had the chance to work for him. Also as I noted, the Indians interpreted his appointment as an indication that we wanted to improve relations, and they welcomed him.

Q: Were relations pretty steady when you left in 1979?

McCASKILL: Yes, pretty steady. As I said, the Desai Government was much more favorably disposed toward us than Indira Gandhi had been. Carter made an official visit in 1979, and while there was one flap during his stay, things were in general upbeat.

Q: We move now to your last assignment, when somebody threw you back into the briar patch. You went to Athens in 1979 as Political Counselor. The assignment obviously makes since. Did this come as a surprise, or did you ask for the assignment?

McCASKILL: I asked for it, as the result of some fortuitous circumstances. Irv Cheslaw, then the senior assignments man in Personnel, was going from Delhi to Colombo, with a change of planes in Madras. Fortunately for me, as it turned out, he had an unexpected delay of several hours. I met him at the airport, took him to the office and later to the Residence for lunch. During the several hours we spent together, he asked where I would like to go on my next assignment. I mentioned DCM in Athens, which he said would be difficult, since I was a very new OC. He then said that he was looking for a Greek language OC to fill the Political Counselor spot. I replied that I was the original Greek language officer in the Department, and I would have expected my name to come out of the computer. Irv replied that things weren't that easy, but said that he thought he could get that assignment for me.

If Irv had not come through Athens, I might well not have gotten the job. I had been overseas then for over ten years, and was not at all familiar with how the open assignments system worked. Anyway, he put my name in the mill, and I heard in several months that I had gotten the job. We left Madras in June, 1979, and arrived in Athens in August for four years.

I might say here that, in retrospect, I feel that I was overseas far too long. When my four years in Athens ended, I had been overseas fifteen years, 1968 to 1983. While I enjoyed every minute of it, I think you tend to lose touch with the way things are done in Washington and are at a disadvantage in competing in the open assignments system.

Q: What was the political situation in Greece when you arrived?

McCASKILL: When I arrived in Greece, there were several questions pending, each exciting and interesting. These were: (1) Greece's return to the military wing of NATO from which it had withdrawn after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974; (2) Greece's entry into the European Community after years of preparation; and (3) the possible move to the Presidency by Karamanlis and the election of a new party leader who would lead the government.

The first of these was the most pressing. Greece wanted back in NATO, but Turkey had imposed conditions on Greece's return which Athens found unacceptable. A good many people spent long hours trying to find the right mix, and there were times when it seemed that agreement was near. NATO did most of the detailed work on this, and the Rogers Plan, named for SACEUR Bernard Rogers, in 1981 seemed to offer a solution. The government of Karamanlis's party, New Democracy, seemed to accept, but then Andreas Papandreou was elected in 1981 and rejected the whole thing. It was sort of in limbo when I left and I must confess that I do not know where it is right now.The second, Greece's accession to the EC, was equally exciting. This was really the fruit of Karamanlis's labor; he apparently concluded long ago that Greece's future was more secure “in Europe” than in alliance with us, that Greece's rightful place was in the EC. Greek membership in the EC may well be Karamanlis's most meaningful monument. Margaret Thatcher once referred to Karamanlis as “The Grand Old Man of Europe”, and I go along with that. Greece's road in the EC has been a rocky one from time to time, but nobody can blame Karamanlis for that. Taking them in was a masterful stroke and he deserves full marks for that. As indicated throughout what I have been saying, Karamanlis was still Prime Minister when I arrived, having been called home from Paris when the coup against Makarios brought on the fall of the military junta in Athens. He had won two elections, I believe, and there was already talk when I got there that he would move up to the Presidency in 1980. Constantine Tsatsos, a faithful friend and follower of Karamanlis, was said to be keeping the seat warm for Karamanlis. It was just assumed that Karamanlis wanted it; it was even said that he had been looking ahead to becoming president when he insisted that the new

constitution provide for a strong presidency. Anyway, the thought of Karamanlis moving up and a new prime minister coming on the scene was very exciting. While we all expected Evangelos Averoff to win leadership of the party, George Rallis, a long-time follower of Karamanlis actually emerged with the prize. I always thought that was a real shame, since Averoff really deserved it; he had given Greece long, long service, and he was well-regarded internationally as well as at home. I thought he would have made a lot better prime minister than Rallis, who was just short of a disaster.

Q: Before Papandreou came into power in 1981, he had been a difficult person for us for a long time. How were we looking upon the possible rise and assumption of power of Andreas Papandreou?

McCASKILL: We were looking on that possibility with some trepidation since he was the antithesis of most of what we supported in Greece. He said publicly on a number of occasions that he would take Greece out of NATO; he said publicly on a number of occasions that he would take Greece out of the EC; he said repeatedly that he would throw the American facilities out of Greece if he were elected. He repeated these things long enough that people — including us, I think — believed at least some of them.

Papandreou was a fascinating character himself. I accompanied our ambassador, Bob McCloskey, on a call on Papandreou one time and found the private Papandreou altogether different from the public Papandreou. I've forgotten the point McCloskey wanted to make — it was on Cyprus as I recall — and Papandreou accepted what McCloskey said, stating something like “if you tell me that, I accept it.”

But when he got up on the stump, the balcony, he was a different person. He was superb on the balcony, if totally unpredictable in what he might say. I went to the final rally before the election of 1981, and there must have been 200 to 300,000 people in Constitution Square. For a Greek political junkie, it was something to see, an unforgettable experience. I had seen his father speaking at Thessaloniki in 1958, but I think the son was better on

the balcony than the father.Of course, he did none of the things he said he was going to do, but we kept him at arm's length his first terms in office. For example, it has become traditional that the president of the EC — it is a rotating presidency on a six-months basis — be invited to the US. Papandreou was the first president not to be invited. He was shunned and I think it was a mistake in retrospect. I've read that the White House has already invited him, though I know none of the details.

Q: He's just become prime minister again. He must be pretty long in the tooth.

McCASKILL: I think over time we realized that we had to look at what Papandreou did and not at what Papandreou said. He obviously didn't take Greece out of the EC; he obviously did not take Greece out of NATO. And he did not throw the bases out overnight. The British historian from Oxford, Richard Clogg, said the other day in a lecture at the FSI that rather than being socialist, he considered Papandreou more a populist. This may be so. I don't think we worry about him anymore; he is obviously in very bad health and one has to wonder who is governing Greece.

One of the most irritating points about Papandreou's people was the fact that they were not accessible at first. They simply would not see us, and we actually heard that there was a committee in his party, known by the acronym PASOK, that had to clear contacts with foreign diplomats. The Ambassador had access, since he had known Papandreou years ago, but at my level and below it was very difficult to see members of PASOK. There was one member of Parliament in Papandreou's party, a man who had been an American citizen and still might have been, and he simply gave me the runaround. When he finally realized we were only interested in normal diplomatic contacts, we began seeing each other and he and his wife came to our house for dinner more than once.

Q: What about the Embassy people? Were we adopting a bunker mentality? How were we dealing with it?

McCASKILL: Well, as I indicated, we kept at it. I came to know the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs fairly well, professionally, that is. And even more important, I came to know a man in Papandreou's inner circle very well. He only spoke Greek, and three of us from the Embassy, one Greek and one other American Greek speaker, would get together with him and two other Greeks and talk very frankly. He reached the point where he felt very comfortable with me, and he and his wife had a small going-away party for my wife and me.

Q: How about our military? Were we telling people on our bases to keep their heads down?

McCASKILL: Everybody did keep their heads down, and tried to be less obvious. A bus was bombed, killing one US military man, but that was after I left Athens.

Q: Were there mobs parading in front of the Embassy at any point while you were there?

McCASKILL: Yes. The anniversary of the November 17 student uprising — which has come to represent the beginning of the end of the military junta — was always marked by a demonstration with a decided anti-US flavor. The demonstration would end with a march past the Embassy. Margaret Papandreou, herself an American citizen born, led the march several times, which was a bit much for me.

Q: How about terrorism while you were there? There had been killings, which continued.

McCASKILL: A Turkish diplomat and his family were gunned down, but that was Armenian terrorism. Our Ambassador, Monty Stearns, received a threat, as I remember. A prominent conservative small newspaper owner was gunned down, and his killer never found. The Chief of the Naval Section, a Navy captain, was gunned down shortly after I left. Senior officers had guards on their homes, and we took all the usual precautions, so there was

considerable awareness of terrorism. Security at the Embassy was tight. It was not the Greece I had known when I was there previously. I liked it more the old way.

Q: Did Cyprus flair up while you were there, or did it remain on a steady course?

McCASKILL: The Greeks and Turks were having troubles, but little of it was related to Cyprus. The questions at issue were the so-called Aegean issues — overflights, definition of the FIR (Flight Information Reporting zone), command and control in the Aegean, definition of the territorial seas, etc. These were all potentially more explosive then than was Cyprus.

When Papandreou first took office, he paid an official visit to Cyprus, the first Greek Prime Minister to have done so. He declared Cyprus “a national issue”, which got a big play in Cyprus. The president of Cyprus visited Athens. If the Cyprus Problem were solved, it would have a salutary effect on the Aegean issues. But I thought then, and continue to feel, that the Aegean issues were more important to Greece than Cyprus. I may have mentioned earlier, but it bears repeating here that I have always thought that 1974 established that Greece would not fight for Cyprus. It would fight for any of the Aegean islands, for any of the Greek islands, but Greece will not fight for Cyprus.

Q: To return to NATO: was Greek departure real? France is not part of NATO and hasn't been since the 1960s, yet France is pretty well included in NATO. How about Greece? Were the Greeks really out of NATO?

McCASKILL: The Greeks were in and they weren't in. They would refuse to participate in military exercises because of the question of remilitarization of Limnos or because of other reasons. Yet they were certainly a part of the North Atlantic Council, the political body of NATO. In some ways they were having their cake and eating it too.

It is interesting now, with the end of the Cold War, that Greece has been disarmed as far as we are concerned, as has Turkey to some extent. Neither is the security factor it was 25

years ago. Neither is vital to the West. This will be difficult for the Greeks — and the Turks — to take. I am a bit out-of-touch on this, but I think Turkey is reacting poorly to the fact that the parameters of our relationship have changed.

Q: All of this needs reevaluation.

McCASKILL: A lot of reevaluation. Papandreou will no longer have the bases to hold over us. Instead of threatening to get out of the EC, he will probably be hanging on to his EC membership by his fingernails.

Q: From what I hear, it sounds like the EC would like to get rid of Greece.

McCASKILL: The EC may be unhappy with Greece, but Greece will never leave the EC since it has a veto over the Turkish application for membership. Turkey has wanted for some time to get in, but has not managed to do so.

Q: You were there for almost two years of Papandreou's first term. Were you seeing signs of what was going to happen? Were people pushing him to get out of NATO, out of the EC, or to get rid of the bases?

McCASKILL: It became clear soon after the election that most of his threats were hollow. What we did see was his embrace of Arafat, an almost-Third World kind of foreign policy. I think it was Ted Couloumbis, a Greek academic, who said that Papandreou had one foot in the East and one in the West, or something like that. He was a real renegade and would deviate from NATO or EC policy as it suited him. The EC was desperately striving for unanimity of EC foreign policy, which they called “political cooperation”. On such things as the shooting down of the KAL airline, they would be unanimous, except for Greece. I know from some of my EC friends that many members of the EC found this very galling, since Greece was considered a kind of poor, country cousin in the EC.

Q: How did the Reagan Administration react to Greece?

McCASKILL: I think Papandreou drove Washington up the wall. As I may have implied, he was one of those politicians who can not resist an open microphone and who is not responsible when he gets one in his hands. The fact that he had lived here for so many years and had been a US citizen at one time made his behavior particularly difficult for many Americans.

Q: Was Washington trying to make things difficult for Greece?

McCASKILL: I don't think so. I think we were just trying to live with what we had. I mentioned that we would not invite him to Washington. There may have been other things but I just can not remember them now.

Q: How about Soviet influence on Papandreou during this period?

McCASKILL: While he was fuzzy, even third- worldish in many ways, I would be inclined to discount Soviet influence. Karamanlis himself had started the opening to the east, with a trip to the Soviet Union in 1979, and had developed what he referred to as Greece's multifaceted foreign policy. I would need to refresh my memory but I can't recall that Papandreou's relations with the Soviet Union or the East Bloc were all that significant.Remember, as I said previously, that Papandreou belonged in the non-aligned camp, philosophically. He was described somewhere by somebody as NATO's only non-aligned member. I did a paper for publication some years ago in which I developed the thesis that Papandreou was really non-aligned in his heart.

Q: How did the Greek Americans look on Papandreou? Did they find this difficult for them?

McCASKILL: Most Greek Americans that I know did not really care for Papandreou, and they realized that his election had weakened Greece's position in Washington to a significant degree. They would still go to bat for Greece on such things as the 10-7 ratio, for example.

Q: But the Greek government and the Greek lobby were not united as they have been in the past?

McCASKILL: There were some efforts to repair relations. Margaret Papandreou came to the US shortly after the elections and snubbed the AHEPA (the American Hellenic Education and Protective Association). AHEPA was upset about it, we heard, and soon sent a high-powered AHEPA delegation to Greece to try to mend fences. I've forgotten whether Papandreou attended their luncheon or whether he sent his wife, but it was generally conceded that they both realized that they needed each other and agreed tacitly to bury the hatchet. As I remember, it was an uneasy relationship after that.

Q: What was your impression of the influence and knowledge of the CIA when you were there?

McCASKILL: I think the Agency's influence — and its expertise — was considerably less during this time than it had been. The Station Chief my first two years there was not very impressive, and I met nobody in the entire four years who had the horse power of, say, a Dick Welch. Still, the last Chief of Station was an old pro. In general, I just do not see how you can send a person into that atmosphere with no background in Greek affairs and expect them to be very effective in intelligence work. I think the high point of Agency effectiveness in Greece had long since passed by 1979, for a number of reasons: lingering belief that we, through the Agency, had been involved in the coup of 1967, the stubborn perception that we were somehow involved in the coup against Makarios in 1974, and on and on.

Q: Greek Americans often had preconceived opinions about what was going on in Greece, and might have been a problem in the Agency.

McCASKILL: I do not recall too many Greek Americans in the Agency my last tour there, though there were many of them in the early years, some of them very good officers. We

had some of the same internal problems with the Agency from 1979 to 1983 that we've always had, with cover, for example. You had to watch them or they would be all over the lot.

Q: One last thing: could you talk about the style of operating of Ambassador McCloskey, and then the style of operating style of Ambassador Stearns.

McCASKILL: Ambassador McCloskey never seemed to enjoy being Ambassador to Greece, for a reason I could never fathom, and he never seemed to take to Greece or the Greeks. He was not very outgoing, certainly around the Embassy. But I think the Greeks respected him. A well-known Greek journalist once told me that if McCloskey told you something, you could believe it, that McCloskey was “a man of his word.” As you know, you either like Greece or you don't like Greece, and I was never sure McCloskey liked it.

Monty Stearns was another story, the consummate professional where Greece was concerned. He liked Greece, and spoke excellent Greek. He and Mrs. Stearns (Toni) read two or three newspapers every morning. I used to joke that Monty needed only an Administrative Counselor and a Consul General since he knew so much about Greece and handled so much of the substantive output of the Embassy himself. Monty had years of experience, had always wanted to be Ambassador to Greece, and was an outstanding one.

But working for McCloskey was better in many ways, since he relied on his staff more than Monty did. I know I personally enjoyed working for him more. McCloskey relied on me more on political questions, and I appreciated that. McCloskey would never have Stearns's feel for Greece or Stearns's contacts. But the senior staff had more role to play under McCloskey, if you can understand that. In short, I admired Monty tremendously and considered him the almost perfect choice for the job when he was there, an excellent career ambassador. But I felt more useful with McCloskey, and felt that I was somehow

making more contribution to Greek-US affairs under McCloskey. I suppose that sums it up pretty well, and is a good note on which to finish.

End of interview